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142.

BEADLE'S DIME NOVELS



THE SAGAMORE OF SACO.

BY MRS. E. OAKES SMITH.

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THE SWAMP SCOUT.

BY W. J. HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF "PEDDLER SPY," "SHAWNEES' FOE," "THE HUNCHBACK," ETC.



Turning abruptly to the right, so as to get away from the main trail, he approached the island from behind. He did not expect to find Marion there. He knew very well that the Swamp Fox was in another part of the swamp, but he was confident that he should find either Peter Horry or his brother. Nor was he disap-

pointed. As he approached the camp from behind, he found himself safe from the view of the partisans by a fringe of low bushes. Lying prostrate behind these, he advanced on his belly, like a snake, until the sound of voices, evidently very near at hand, warned him to desist.

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THE
SAGAMORE OF SACO.

And she who climbed the storm-swept steep,
She who the foaming wave would dare
So oft, love's vigil here to keep,
Stranger, albeit thou think'st I dote,
I know, I know she watches there.—HOFFMAN.

BY MRS. E. OAKES SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "THE NEWSBOY," "BERTHA AND LILY," "BALD EAGLE," ETC.

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THE SAGAMORE OF SACO.

CHAPTER I.

STANDING ALONE.

"JOHN is a wild renegade, and a shame to the colony," exclaimed Captain Richard Bonyton, in a burst of unfatherly indignation. It was evident that he neither understood nor loved this son John of his.

"I do not think so badly of him," rejoined Sir Richard Vines. "We must bear in mind, my friend, that in breaking away from the trammels of society, we have helped to sow this unchartered license in our children, good neighbor."

"That may be," rejoined Bonyton, bitterly, "and we are likely to reap the fruits of it. My renegade son and your mad daughter are like to make a comely span."

The Governor started and turned pale at this unceremonious speech, but he replied, in a calm voice:

"My daughter, Mr. Bonyton, shall be looked to."

Bonyton grasped his hand warmly.

"Nay, nay, my noble friend, we are both stricken of God and afflicted in this matter; let us not add a drop to our bitter cup by estrangement between ourselves. Look yonder where they come."

At this moment the two of whom they had been speaking emerged from the verge of the forest. The girl was evidently angry, for she gesticulated rapidly, and gave emphasis to her words by twanging her bowstring till it gave out a sharp, shrill sound like a subdued yell. As they approached, the two fathers stepped aside, where they could watch the pair unperceived.

At a glance they saw that both were dripping with water, and both were pale and excited.

The lips of John Bonyton were compressed to a single line of blue, his brow contracted sharply, and, as they paused on the verge of the forest, his flashing black eyes were fixed

upon the face of Hope, who stood looking upward to him, her exquisite head thrown back; while ever and anon she gave her long hair a shake to relieve it of the heavy drops of water, and then twanged the bowstring as a help to her expression, they heard her say:

"You know I can swim, John Bonyton. You know I never want help anywhere, nor for any thing." (A shake of the hair, and twang of bow.)

"I know you fear nothing, Hope—"

"Fear!" interrupted the girl. "Fear! I scorn the idea. Haven't I leaped a hundred times from rock to rock across the Saco falls? Leaped the wolve's chasm?"

"I know it all, Hope, but—"

"But me no *buts*! Haven't I defied Samoset himself when he made me angry? (A shake and a twang.) When that ugly Terrentine would have carried me off to make me into a medicine-woman, did he not barely escape with his life? and hadn't I his scalping-knife out of his own girdle to defend myself with?"

Young Bonyton shuddered.

"You fear nothing, I know, Hope, but I could not see you drown."

"Drown!" returned the other, twanging her bow till it fairly yelled; "do you not know I would rather drown ten times, than be brought out of the water in your arms? You know I would, John Bonyton."

"I could not see you drown, Hope," he reiterated, with more of softness in his look and tone.

"Suppose I chose to drown, John Bonyton, what right had you to interfere?"

"Hope—dear Hope, I know you did."

"Well, and what if I did? Do you think I will be pulled out like a fish, and be laid upon the bank to open and shut my mouth for lack of breath, and you looking on? I tell you, John Bonyton, I hate you."

The youth smiled—a manly, deferential smile, and whispered a word in her ear. Suddenly she started, gave one wild, earnest look into his face—then stepped aside. The blood rushed like a torrent to her face, and she fled homeward with the speed of a startled fawn.

At this moment the quick ear of young Bonyton detected the sound of footsteps, and he pressed forward to encounter his father and Sir Richard Vines. The whole truth flashed upon his mind.

"You have seen all and heard all," cried the excited youth. "Sir Richard, give me little Hope to wife and I promise to do and be all you ask of me."

The two calm, stern men glanced at each other, and each smiled, it might have been thoughtfully, it might have been in scorn; whichever it was, the effect was to irritate the already vehement youth, and he went on:

"Yes, you condemn us both; we have always been met with scorn and contempt. Because we do not join your long, canting, hypocritical prayers, you have caused us to live like outcasts in the land. My very soul loathes the doings of this people, and by the God above, if you do not give me Hope to wife, I will have her, if I back my suit with an army of Indians."

"In sooth, you would make a pretty pair," retorted the elder Bonyton, in clear, cold tones and a sarcastic curl of the lip.

"Do not taunt me now, father; I can not bear it," and he went on more calmly. "Give me Hope, Sir Richard, and I will leave this wild life; I will plant, study, fish, go to sea, and even aim to be eminent in the church; any thing that you and my father may exact, I will do, only give me this one desire of my life."

It may be this appeal from the young, handsome lips of the boy touched some delicate, long-silent link in the chain of association in the mind of Sir Richard Vines, for his look and voice softened, and he laid his hand tenderly upon the shoulder of the youth, and said:

"On my soul, John, I am sorry for this, most sorry. Go to England, my dear boy; this wild land affords no scope for a mind like yours. I will give you letters to my noble kinsmen, who will promote your interest, and you will forget all this."

"Never—never!" returned the youth.

"Time works wonders, my boy."

"Alas! it makes the noble forget their youth and the true forget their truth!"

"Go, my son, to a land that needs just such ardent spirits as yours; go and help your king and country."

A dark frown passed over the face of Captain Bonyton, for it was well known that the colonists, with few exceptions, sympathized with the parliament of England, and not with Charles First. But touched to finer issues, the headstrong youth felt a softness steal over him, and he answered to the sentiment rather than to the fact of paternity.

"Nay, my father, give me Hope; the world is nothing to me deprived of her."

Here the natural sarcasm of the elder Bonyton broke forth.

"Go, John, go, in God's name; it were a pity that so much chivalry should be wasted here in this wilderness. Go, fight with the king against his turbulent parliament. I doubt if thy single hand may not turn the scale. That bold man Cromwell is making hot work at home. It were better for thee to go there and die in harness, than stay here and marry a mad woman."

Young Bonyton's eyes glared momentarily upon the father who gave utterance to this cutting speech, but he turned to Sir Richard and said, imploringly:

"Tell me, yea or nay, my father."

Sir Richard pressed his hand upon his brow, to crowd back the pang caused by the words of the elder Bonyton, and then he took the hand of John and said, in a voice so low and solemn that it was well-nigh inaudible:

"Young man, you know not what you ask. Hope must not be, can not be, a wife. She is God's child, John. He has seen fit to reserve some of his gifts to be her eternal inheritance. She is incomplete in mind—not mad."

Bonyton groaned audibly, and Sir Richard continued: "Go to England, my dear boy. I see that Charles is wrong, very wrong. I see Cromwell will place his plebeian foot upon the royal purple. I see the virtuous Hampden will be crushed amidst conflicting interests. I foresee great, marvelous changes, the germs of a new order of things. Go, my son, and cast in your mite into the treasury of order and patriotism. You have youth, health, and the impulses of a generous and heroic nature: go, and feel your heart respond to the promptings of duty. Go, and God be with you."

He had spoken with warmth and enthusiasm, the tears springing to his eyes, and the young man grasped his hand with energy, and replied :

"I *will* go, my father. I will be all that you depict, sure that Hope will be mine, or will remain as she now is. Shall it not be so, Sir Richard? Shall I not some day, when more worthy of her, call her wife?"

"John, men, who are men, prove their manhood by resisting inordinate desires. Such desires granted often come in the shape of a curse."

"That they do," responded Captain Bonyton with bitterness. "Like the hankerings of God's people for flesh, the Almighty grants it to them, till they are filled with loathing and abhorrence, even of that for which they had lusted."

Sir Richard Vines, obeying a sudden warm impulse of the heart, threw his arms around the unhappy youth and exclaimed :

"My poor boy! Forget my little Hope, or let her be to you only as a sister."

CHAPTER II.

THE FATAL OMEN.

It is necessary that we should go back in the details of our story, in order to give our readers the antecedents of the characters which we have so unceremoniously brought upon the stage of action, and that we may show the locality of our history.

The State of Maine, it must be remembered, was permanently settled so early as 1616, and it is most probable in the spring of that year, by Sir Richard Vines, the friend and companion of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, of Raleigh Gilbert, and the unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh, the half-brother of the latter. We say permanently, because there is no testimony of his having abandoned the colony he had thus founded, and there is abundant record of his movements, his enterprise and his history, till it was finally incorporated into the Plymouth charter

Sir Richard Vines was a stanch Tory and Episcopalian, and as he was a fearless man, robust and hearty in character, he was not likely to greatly swerve from those principles inherent to his rank; hence, it may be inferred he was not over popular with the no less unflinching Puritan radicals of the Presbyterian order at the Plymouth colony.

The wife of Sir Richard Vines, the Lady Joanna, was sister to the wife of Sir Walter Raleigh. Hence, in removing from the old world, the interests of the family were by no means dissevered from "merry old England," as they were wont to tenderly call the "Fatherland."

I must describe somewhat the location chosen by Sir Richard Vines for his habitation, that my readers may the better understand portions of our story.

It stood at the head of what is called the Pool, a sheet of water resembling in shape the Mediterranean sea as seen upon the maps. Indeed, it is a counterpart of the Mediterranean diminished vastly in size. The Pool is separated from the outside waves of the Atlantic by a long ridge or reef of sand, of more than a mile in extent—this reef hemming it in from the ocean, gives place to a beautiful inland basin, which is entered by a narrow strait, as if it were a young Gibraltar. Once in, the waters expand, and spread themselves with complacency at their successful attempt to *oceanize* upon a small scale.

Nothing can be conceived more daintily picturesque than the scenery surrounding the Pool. There are no marshes—no malaria of fogs; all is fresh, clear white sand—a long ocean reach, and the grand overhanging woods giving a pathway to the resounding Saco, or broken here and there by esplanades of green meadows, where the deer and her young disport themselves, and the beaver constructs his half-human habitation.

At the head of this beautiful sheet of water, as we have said, lived Sir Richard Vines; in a wilderness of thousands of miles, visited occasionally by some adventurous ship from the old world, or from the island of Barbadoes by some trader in fish, which had already become a valuable staple. His little boat rocked securely within the Pool, while his trusty followers joined him in the chase, or went on long fishing and exploring expeditions.

A frank, impulsive man, he gave and inspired confidence; brave himself, he repelled the aggressor, simply by the force of his presence. Just and kind in all his dealings with them, the Indians came and went about his premises exciting no fear, and conscious of no distrust.

Besides the castle of Sir Richard, there sprung up immediately about it, the less pretentious houses of his followers, and cabins constructed by occasional traders, to say nothing of the bark wigwams of the Indians, which clustered here and there near the river, the friendly owners of which gave the adventurers many a lesson in hunting the wild denizens of the forest, or spearing and netting the treasures of the water.

Mistress Joanna was an intrepid as well as handsome dame, who entered warmly into all the pursuits of her husband, while at the same time she had a certain self-distrust, most winning and lovely in a woman who finds herself allied to a wise, protective husband, whose authority she is proud to accept with wifely tenderness, and womanly grace.

We must now describe an incident which occurred toward the close of the year 1618, which is too intimately associated with the character of our heroine to be passed by in silence.

It was a gusty, raw twilight near the end of October. A fall of rain, with now and then a "spit of snow," had made a gloomy day in that cold region; the gorgeous autumnal trees were fast scattering their rainbow baldrick to the earth, and the summer birds, long away upon their pilgrimage to sunnier skies, were replaced only by the little snow-birds, which pecked about the piazza, darted from branch to branch of the denuded trees, content and joyous in themselves at a time when nature is a very niggard of her favors.

A ship was hourly expected from England, and recent intelligence of a more favorable view taken by the court of the case of Sir Walter Raleigh, (who had been imprisoned in the Tower of London,) had awakened not only a hope of his release, but even a hope that the ship might bring him out to the home so affectionately provided for him by his brother-in-law. So strongly had this hope wrought upon the mind of Mistress Vines, that she had even caused fires to be built in the "Raleigh rooms," and had hung evergreens and ruby

berries along the rafters, amid silken drapery and snowy linen, till the apartment wore a look not only of warmth and comfort, but of sumptuous elegance also.

She stood in the center of the room, dreamily contemplating the glowing, crackling flame upon the hearth, and feasting her thoughts with the sweet hope of a union with her sister Raleigh, when she was conscious of a shadowy outline that passed before her, *and a drop of blood fell upon her hand*. Cold rigors lifted her hair upon her head; her eyes distended; and with a loud shriek she fell convulsed upon the floor.

When consciousness returned, she desired to be left alone with Sir Richard, to whom she related the cause of her sudden attack.

"I am fully persuaded," she went on to say, "that the worst has come upon our brother, and we have been deceived by a base court, and lying officials."

Sir Richard tried to soothe her with better hopes, but in vain. Calling her old nurse to her side, he strove by every means to restore her to warmth and her wonted cheer; but, day by day she sickened, and at length in the Raleigh rooms became the mother of a daughter. This circumstance, while it restored her to a more equable and healthful state of mind, did not dispel the impression which had produced the attack. It is needless to say that the next ship brought out the fatal news of the beheading of Sir Walter Raleigh, upon that 29th of October, so well remembered by Mistress Vines.

She named her little one Hope, with a sad irony. She was a small, weird-looking baby, with large, dark-gray eyes, and skin white, even waxen white; never did the least tinge of the rose visit the cheek. Her eyes were shaded by long, black lashes, but, as she grew, it became evident that her hair was to be *snowy white*. It would seem that this feature of the human frame being more volatile than all others, is the one most likely to be affected with change, and that that moment of horror, which had struck the mother to the earth, changed forever the color of her child's hair, and blanched its cheek to a perpetual paleness.

Years passed, and sons and daughters graced the mansion of Sir Richard Vines; fair, even beautiful were the children, trained to all gentle usages by the father and mother, and

finally they were sent to England to be "finished" and presented at court, for the true Englishman never neglects the duties of his birth, or the privileges of his rank.

Little Hope had reached the age of seventeen. She was exceedingly diminutive in stature, but most exquisitely formed. Her cheek was still colorless, and her long, abundant hair still white; but this, while it gave a peculiarity, did not detract from her beauty. Sometimes the sisters of Hope would call her "*white head*," a term which she resented in a manner unwonted to her character, in which was no ingredient of vanity.

It was evident that she considered her hair a sacred badge, and tenderly associated with the fate of her uncle Raleigh; hence, any jest aimed at this peculiarity not only shocked her reverence, but offended her taste. She held long and solemn talks with the old English nurse, Aunt Sallie, about the period of her birth, and the cruel death of Sir Walter, and the good creature did not fail to impress her mind with her own superstitious belief in the supernatural omen which we have heretofore related.

"Your hair is a mark, my pretty darling," she would say; "it is a mark, and you are none the worse for it. Not one of your sisters can compare with my pretty, for handsome looks, with all their airs."

It was evident that Hope was the favorite of Aunt Sallie, who sometimes conceived that the child was not fully appreciated by the members of the household, whose characters circled within the more ordinarily understood limits. Hope was freakish and petulant, Aunt Sallie would exclaim:

"And why shouldn't she have her own way! Surely she is pretty enough to have it, and I see no fault to be found with her."

Indeed, Aunt Sallie had little cause for complaint, as all the freaks of Hope were patiently tolerated, and her peculiar, but most abundant hair accepted as no detriment to her good looks. At home these peculiarities were less dangerous to her than they were hereafter to become to her abroad.

The Indians around her saw and turned again and again to mark those lips, of that ruby red which goes with perfect health; black, perfectly arched brows, and long, dark lashes,

shading eyes of wonderful brilliancy and depth of expression. The whole aspect of her beauty, while it was artistic, would have presented also the idea of something preternatural, even to those less impressible by such things than the Indian.

We will now resume the thread of our narrative.

CHAPTER III.

SORROWFUL MISGIVINGS.

SCARCELY had Hope doffed her wet garments, and wrung the water from her hair, before she was summoned to the presence of her lady mother. It was a pleasant group, that of the accomplished family in the large hall, around which hung old portraits brought from England; the demi-armor still worn by the gentlemen of the day; the knightly sword, and shapely steel corslet; trophies of the hunt, and implements of the chase; belts of wampum, and models of birch canoes; bows and flint-tipped arrows. It was a silvan, stately room, such as taste, enterprise and thrift only could furnish forth in a family struggling to overcome the barbarisms of a new world.

In a stiff, high-backed chair, with cushions at her feet, sat the elegant matron of the household; her handsome daughters, each with book, music or broidery in hand, were gathered near her person, as if the companionship were mutually pleasant.

In the embrasure of the window, looking out upon the Pool, with the long reach of ocean in the distance, sat Sir Richard Vines himself, the perfection of manly grace and noble bearing, but now his brow was slightly contracted, and an uneasy flush was upon his cheek.

As little Hope entered the room, he held out his hand to her; she sprung forward and threw her arms about his neck. The knight returned her caress, and patting her cheek tenderly, said:

“Go to your mother, child.”

Hope had nearly crossed the room in obedience, when she suddenly turned round, saying, petulantly :

"She must not talk to me, papa; I am in a bad humor, and can not bear it."

Mistress Vines answered, with unwonted sternness:

"Come hither, Hope, and seat yourself upon the cushion. You must leave off these ways."

The little lady walked to the side of the room, where, leaning her shoulder against a pilaster, she crossed one foot over the other, and bent her head, saying:

"I will stand here, please, mamma; I hate to sit down."

"I prefer you should sit," persisted Mistress Vines.

"Indeed, I can not, mamma. I feel as if I should choke, tightened up in one of those chairs. Indeed, I can not sit down, mamma."

The sisters could not refrain from a slight titter, which was instantly checked, for the parents were both severely grave, and Miss Bloomfield, the governess, shook her little decorous head till every cork-screw curl upon it was whirling and jerking in a perfect storm of reprehension.

Before, however, a word had been spoken, Hope suddenly recovered her native vivacity. She eyed the group with a comical shake of the head, and burst into one of her merry laughs. Coming forward, she knelt upon the cushion at her mother's feet, and tossing back her hair till it enshrouded her like a vail, she cried :

"I know all you will say to the bad girl; I will be mamma, and reprimand Hope. Listen!

"Hope, you are too idle, and too wild—no better than a wild Indian. You are a very unmaidenly girl, fit for nothing good. Why do you not sit bolt upright in high-backed chairs, as your sisters do? Look at them! How nice they are! Not a hair of the head out of place. Hear them make ugly sounds on a hollow board! See how ashamed they are of you, Hope! You are a grief to us all, Hope, indeed you are. To-day John Bonyton pulled you out of the water like a fish. You are a trial and a plague, Hope!"

Here she kissed the hand of Mistress Vines, which had been tenderly laid upon her head, and then once more threw

herself into her father's arms, and burst into a wild torrent of sobs and tears.

The family were used to these sudden transitions of feeling upon her part, but this seemed a mood so much more painful than ordinary, that all were shocked.

"Do not let my cold, still sisters look at me, papa," whispered Hope. Then, lifting up her head, she added, solemnly:

"Papa, you will soon have no little Hope."

The knight shuddered, and pressed the poor child more tenderly to his heart.

"Tell me why, little daughter!"

"Every little while, dear father, I see poor, pale-faced Hope standing before me, looking sad, and oh! so weary, and wringing her hands."

Mr. Vines certainly felt a cold chill run over him at this description. She went on.

"This morning I saw Hope seated on the ledge yonder, her hands to her face, and she weeping, weeping. Mistress Bonyton, too, told me that this little purple spot upon my shoulder, which you used to kiss, papa, when I was a little girl, is the devil's mark, and called me a witch."

Sir Richard arose hastily from his seat and whispered a few words in the ear of his wife. A new cause for anxiety had been suggested by the words of Mistress Bonyton, for at that time the old world was convulsed by stories of possession and witchcraft, and it was no light thing to have the aspersion cast upon an individual that he or she might be a witch.

At this moment the sharp whiz of an arrow passed the lattice. Hope darted from the room, and seated herself at an upper loop-hole, where she could see without being seen. She watched John Bonyton where hour after hour he traversed the slip of sand which separated the Pool from the ocean, ever and anon sending uneasy glances toward the mansion.

Day after day passed, and Hope went no more abroad, nor did she send any token to her impatient lover. Day after day John Bonyton wandered along the shore, as if its impatient turbulence best responded to the wild passions that consumed him. The dirge of the sea, creeping amid the weeds that cushioned the rocks, and then hurrying from point to point in stifled sobs—anon lifting incoherent voices to storm the ear

of night—responded to some unknown depth within, and soothed while it deepened his emotions.

Could the unhappy youth have looked within the bower of Hope, he would have seen her seated upon the floor, her intense eyes following his slightest movement, and she weeping bitterly. She refused food, and nothing could tempt her from her covert.

At length Samoset, chief of the neighboring tribe of Indians, desired to see her. He brought her a beautiful osier basket, in which was hidden a wood-pigeon. Hope lifted the bird from its cluster of leaves and found the blood trickling from its breast, and a small arrow still in the wound. She recoiled with pity, and cast reproachful eyes upon the chief. Samoset pointed to Bonyton pacing the beach, and sternly showed the arrow in the breast of the dove. He whispered a word or two in her ear, and turned away, followed by Hope.

No sooner did John Bonyton perceive the figure of Hope moving slowly toward the woods, than he followed in her footsteps. Seating herself upon her favorite ledge of rocks, she awaited his coming. The youth was greatly shocked at the change both in her manner and looks, and he cast himself at her feet and pressed both her hands within his own.

“Poor, dear Hope!” he murmured.

She looked sadly in his face—a look of silent, helpless reproach more emphatic than words. At length she said, in a voice scarcely above a whisper:

“It seems very strange to me, dear John, how people can get along in this world, and why they are put here to be made so miserable. And so you will go away, John Bonyton—go, and we shall never meet again.”

The young man smoothed back the hair which had blown across the face of the speaker, and the passive manner so unlike Hope’s old self, emboldened him to lay her pale cheek upon his shoulder, and he answered:

“I will not be gone long, Hope; the time will soon pass away.”

“But what shall I do, with nobody to understand me? And, besides this, John Bonyton who goes away will not be the John Bonyton that comes back.”

“Why not, little Hope?”

"Why not? How can you ask, when nothing is to-day what it was yesterday?"

He made the usual protestations of never-changing devotion, which she broke short with her old impetuosity, waving her hand for him to be silent, when a twig snapped near by, and John Bonyton sprung to his feet.

"It is Acashee," said Hope, coldly. "She is always in your path."

Again all was silent save the wood-robin, which sung upon a branch overhead, and Hope resumed:

"Do not go, John Bonyton. Do not enter the ship that will bear you away, for I shall never see you again. You may come back—but *my* John Bonyton will return no more."

The youth smiled fondly, for Hope had never before shown him such favor. The mournful tenderness of her looks and words thrilled him with rapture, and he replied:

"I shall return ten times more worthy of you, Hope."

Hope started, turned pale, and withdrew her hand from his grasp.

"I said you would change, and you boast that you will."

"Only to be better, nobler, more worthy of your love."

She looked dreamily into his face and murmured:

"And I? I shall be the same—"

"Surely, dear Hope. Lovely and beautiful. Always growing dear to my heart."

She shook her head, and in the same dreamy way went on:

"When the sun goes down I am never quite sure it will come up again; and when it does it has not the same look. The same cloud never returns; the withered blossom does not bloom again; no face wears twice the same look; the smile of yesterday is not that of to-day."

"But the heart, little Hope, the heart is the same."

"No, no, no! least of all. That goes on and adds or loses and the eye tells of its altered beatings. No, John Bonyton, I shall never see *you* again. See how changed we two are since we last met. Look upon the rock yonder jutting over the sea. What do you behold?"

The youth followed the wavy line of the small, pale hand, and said, with a smile:

"I see the bright sunshine there, and the sea-birds dip their wings into the sea."

She still pointed with a sad smile.

"You see nothing more! I see little Hope standing there leaning over the water; she is pale and thin, and her hair has become a shroud."

The youth burst into tears, and clasped her wildly in his arms. At this moment there was a cry as of the loon, and Hope faintly answered it. She knew Acashee had witnessed the scene, and an angry flush overspread her face. With a sudden spring she descended the ledge, and returned to the house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NET-WEAVER.

AMONG the Indian maidens was a bold, handsome girl, a little older than Hope, who was her constant and favored companion, and having more intelligence and tact than usually falls to the primitive maidens of the forest. Acashee, or the Spider, (literally net-weaver, or snare-builder,) had contrived to divest herself of the usual toils and drudgeries of her sex in a savage condition.

Acashee was the daughter of Samoset, of the Kennebec tribe—the Indian who went to and remained three years in England, where he shared the royal favor of Elizabeth, whose accomplished courtiers vied with each other in lavishing attentions upon a man who presented a new and generous type of the race, undebauched by the vices of civilization.

Shakespeare without doubt received many a poetic hint from the noble savage, and most certainly owed to him the story of the Tempest, and the fable of the Pucks, or as the Indians called them Puck-wud-jees—being literally wood-fairies.

The courage and address of Acashee had rendered her the friend and companion of her father, and his attendant upon many a long and perilous march. Among savage tribes intelligence of a strange or interesting character is conveyed by

fleet runners, who go from tribe to tribe after the manner of the Highland clans so graphically described by Walter Scott in the "speed, Malise, speed" of his spirited poem. Accordingly, Samoset was one of the first to reach the sea-shore, and look with wonder upon the ship which had come like a rare bird, or superior agent, from the spirit-land. He it was who, fifteen years afterward, hailed the Pilgrims at Plymouth with the words: "Welcome, Englishmen."

Samoset had been of great service to the colony upon the Saco river, and Sir Richard Vines and family had not failed to treat his daughter Acashee with much consideration. Little Hope more especially singled her out as her favorite friend and companion. She liked her for her beauty, her courage, her strength and activity, combined with an easy gayety rare in the children of the wood, and almost unknown among the anxious and over-taxed pilgrims to the new world.

The artful savage maiden, acute and penetrating, had not failed to perceive the peculiar characteristics of Hope, and had not failed to turn them to account in her own way. She played her game in a manner worthy of her name, of Net-weaver, in the best sense, Spider in its worst. She hinted to the melancholy and superstitious Pilgrim settlers, doubts of her state as a true human being, for the Indians believed in the incarnation of certain malignant beings, no less than the ascetic whites.

To the Indians of the many tribes with whom she and her father were in constant intercourse, she enlarged upon Hope's gifts as a wonderful medicine-woman, and it was she who had more than once induced them to make attempts to abduct her for purposes of divination.

While our poor Hope was thus constantly under the eye of her wily and malignant companion, she was a source, also, of much solicitude on the part of the parents, who began to feel painfully that evil and cruel thoughts were rife in the minds of their neighbors regarding her, which might end in some tragedy even more distressing than the fate of Sir Walter Raleigh, with whom Hope was so fond of associating herself.

Mistress Vines was a cheerful, active, dignified woman, or she would have been sore distressed as the conviction grew

upon her that all was not quite right with little Hope. In high courtly or civilized society her peculiarities would not have been observed—the pressure of the same serving to keep its members in equal balance; but in an experience admitting of greater latitude, it became evident that she, the product of a civilized, but bred amidst a primitive, race, had inherited the graces of the one, and absorbed the wild freedom of the other.

Having once obtained the key to the formation of her mind, all its manifestations were complete and harmonious. The study of a book was irksome to her, but that which she learned from the utterance of the human tongue never escaped her memory.

There was a preternatural directness in all the elements of her mind—a wild, vivid adherence to truth under every aspect, which rendered any modification of it, under any circumstances, impossible to her; hence it was followed without the power to anticipate results. It might have been genius—for nothing was impossible to her; and yet, according to ordinary calculations, little was attainable. She would say, “I know it is thus and thus,” but the why it was so it was impossible for her to define.

“Did it ever occur to you, my husband,” asked Mistress Vines, “that there is something in the look of poor little Hope strangely like our brother Raleigh?”

“Often, often, sweetheart; nor is it strange. Do not be distressed about Hope; she is as God has given her to us, and in his good time he will clear away those shadows which obscure the brightness of the spirit he has made. Take heart, good dame.”

“She is good and beautiful in spite of all,” rejoined the wife, eying her daughter tenderly. “Shall we ever send her to England?”

“Thy heart yearns for the mother-land, sweetheart?”

“Nay, my dear, good husband, I am more than content. I live not for England, but for thee and our little ones.”

And she leaned both hands clasped upon his shoulder, in a most tender, wifely way.

“If thou art truly content, sweet heart,”—and in saying this he separated the words, as if the better to express the

deep sentiment of the love he bore her—"I rejoice, deeply rejoice, for old England is verging upon critical times; and even here, men and women are not quite safe from evil tongues and evil designs!"

He drew her nearer to his breast as he said this, for there were surmises and rumors which he did not name to his lovely wife.

It was evident to both parents that Hope must be left to her own existence, and suffered to enjoy it in her own way; nor was this by any means a limited or degraded one. Her exquisite organization, her perfect health and vivid vitality, were combined with a degree of hardy activity astonishing in one so delicately made.

As a child, the Indians had treated Hope with a deference and tenderness that implied a doubt whether a creature so fair and diminutive could master the rude encounters of life; but as she grew in years, and they saw her small feet so active, and her tiny wrath so ready to wreak itself, their admiration knew no bounds. They delighted to become her instructors in all wildwood games and primitive exploits, and so apt a pupil did they find her that she seemed to their simple observation a prodigy of cleverness rather than one whose mental organization was a subject of doubt or anxiety.

She was expert at the bow and arrow, could swim like a duck, and come out of the water and shake the drops from her long hair without that shrunken, *soused-over* look so common to women who breast the waters. She was fond of the Indian mode of dress, rarely being willing to conform to the usages prevalent at the time. She was fond of all ornaments that left her movements unimpeded, but refused the use of braid, bodkin, or fillet to curb the redundancy of her locks.

None of these things were lost upon the artful Acashee, who, in turn, teased or flattered Hope, as might best subserve the great purpose of her life, which was to separate her from John Bonyton, for whom she had conceived a passion the more profound for the obstacles which promised to defeat its gratification.

Hope was well aware of the arts of the girl; but she liked her bold, fearless ways, and her untiring activity. With senses as keen as those of the young savage, she detected her hanging

like a shadow over her own pathway, and knew that John Bonyton in the chase of the wild deer, and spearing salmon far up the Falls of the Saco, was often confronted by her rival, and was not unwilling to loiter in the presence of the bright, handsome savage.

On the morning of the day when our story opens, when Hope was found quarreling so vehemently with her lover for having saved her from a long sleep under the sea, the two girls, as was their wont, had met upon a point of land a few miles distant from the Pool, designing to follow the beautiful winding of the Saco up to the Falls, and watch the salmon, like golden ingots, "shoot" the cataract.

Standing upon this promontory, Hope's dreamy eyes wandered over the landscape, drinking in its beauty, as her kinsman Raleigh might have done in one of his poetic moods. Acashee, on the contrary, practiced all the subtle arts of her nature, and all the coquetries of a wildwood beauty, to interest the heart of John Bonyton. Aroused at length from her reverie, Hope saw the flashing eyes of Bonyton resting admiringly, as she thought, upon her companion. With a wild impulse of undefined jealousy and rage, she threw aside her bow and arrows, and cast herself into the sea.

She was rescued, as we have seen, by the athletic youth, greatly to the discomfiture of the impulsive child. Severe and biting reproaches were exchanged subsequently between the two girls, in which the red maiden betrayed a readiness and spirit as unexpected as it was fearful. Hope was not lacking in her vocabulary of spleen, and she turned her head scoffingly, crying :

"You are a long-legged, big, black-bodied spider, and that is what your name means."

Acashee darted forward, seizing her by the wrist ; she bent down and looked fiercely into her eyes ; grinding her teeth, she hissed with the rage and venom of the serpent, into the ears of Hope :

"I *am* a spider ! I weave a strong web. I will snare in it the little fly. Go to, you had a friend ; now you have a foe."

And dashing the hand from her grasp, she plunged into the forest.

Hope laughed a bitter, contemptuous laugh, and turned slowly homeward, followed by the repentant Bonyton, to have the indignant words of the girl and the protestations of the other overheard by the two fathers.

CHAPTER V.

THE "ELECT."

THE voyage which it was proposed for John Bonyton to take to England was deferred from time to time, and the young people resumed their careless, desultory life, now in the forest and now upon the sea—Acashee even more devoted than before in her attentions upon Hope. It might be noticed, however, that the people of the colony were more watchful, and even more critical, in their observance of the latter than usual.

Often as she passed in her short velvet tunic with her white hair floating in the wind, glances were exchanged, intermingled with now and then an ominous and malignant frown.

While the Indians watched her slightest movement with interest akin to awe, the less sympathetic colonists looked upon her with distrust amounting to aversion, and many had conceived the idea that she belonged to that dangerous class "accursed of God," and to be destroyed by men, as in those olden times, when the King of Israel consulted one akin to Hope in the person of the Witch of Endor. But, as yet, these were surmises only whispered in secret, and concealed from the knowledge of the Governor and his friends.

The Indians of the Saco tribe, while they were more powerful than all others of the eastern tribes, were less aggressive, also. Conscious of their power, they cared little to molest those whom they could easily crush, and hence they devoted themselves warmly to the white colonists, perceiving in them at once much to excite their admiration and stimulate their own endeavor.

Hope was from the first installed a favorite, and they watched her slightest look or word with interest, and then, as years developed more and more her individual characteristics, she was invested by them with a profound awe. They had penetrated some of these marked features, even before they were divined by her own family, and they would come long miles to bring her some dainty gift, exquisite tiny baskets, brodered moccasins, or shells from the sea-shore, and seating themselves upon the mat under the broad piazza, watch her every movement, and listen to the silvery tongue of the child with hair like the snow-flake.

Had Hope been ambitious or deceitful, she might have turned her mysterious power over the savage mind to some account; but, simple-hearted and truthful, she enjoyed her little triumphs without any thought of what might lie beyond. The chief of the Saco tribe, seeing her contempt for all household avocations, looked upon her with wonder and delight as the incarnation of some of their own deities, who would eventually bring great glory to the tribe.

Mistress Vines, while no one could bring the slightest charge against her, was by no means popular with the "*elect ladies*" of the colony. Mindful of her household, over which she presided with affectionate dignity, and truly loving and honoring her husband, she was little inclined to countenance any course which should create any interest outside of the sacred relation of the family.

Thoughtful as she was tender, judicious as she was affectionate, she was doubly happy in a husband worthy of all reverence and duty, to whom she could refer all abstruse and vexing questions of opinion, and whose decisions were to her wifely mind the wisest and best.

Mistress Bonyton, the mother of John, was in the habit of collecting the principal women of the colony at her house on the Saturday of every week, for the purposes of prayer and religious discussion.

Mistress Vines had received many invitations to join this supplicating conclave, but from the above reasons, together with a natural vivacity of character, which rendered gloom and pretension distasteful to her, she had neglected to ally herself with these ascetic women in what she regarded as an

evidence of cant, and, it may be, of hypocrisy also, to her clear, cheerful intellect.

Captain Bonyton, however, secretly gave Sir Richard a hint, in a neighborly way, that the women felt themselves aggrieved at this omission, and the more, hinted at dark, mysterious opinions in regard to little Hope, which it might be well to counteract by a more familiar intercourse of Mistress Vines with her neighbors.

Sir Richard having suggested this to his fair dame, she might have been seen the next afternoon, fresh as a rose, and bright as the morning, picking her way to the mansion of Mistress Bonyton.

She carried herself bravely in her high heels, and the stiffest of stiff ruffs barricading her fair neck, and her rich brown hair drawn back from her handsome forehead, and frizzed in a way wondrous to behold. A little less of style, a little less of fineness, my lady, would have better suited the austere dames who await thy coming!

They were seated in the "*fore-room*" of the house, the shutters of which were partially closed, giving a dim, ghostly aspect to the interior, in which were seated about twenty women, plainly dressed, each with her hair parted at the top of the head and drawn to the back as smooth and tight as hair could well be drawn. The elderly matrons were seated at one side, and the younger grouped together near the door. Fair, pale young faces were not wanting; prematurely grave, but pure and tender.

"It is nearly upon the stroke of three, and yet she does not come. Reach me the Bible; the Lord's work must not wait because of his tardy servants."

This from Mistress Bonyton, who drew down her face ominously, and closed with a groan.

"What think you of that child, Hope? I would have thy opinion, dame, for I have great misgivings."

Mistress Bonyton put her finger in the Bible, where she had found the chapter she designed to read, and she now closed the book over it, and standing the large volume on end, bent forward, resting her chin upon it, she looked out of the corner of her eye at Mistress Higgins, who had asked the question.

"I think thy thought, dame."

The younger women started; but Mistress Higgins continued:

"I saw her even now, as I came in, worrying a snake, and truly it was a rare sight to see the docility of the beast."

"Whist! my lady is at the door!" exclaimed one of the younger women.

Mistress Vines entered, with her pretty, courtly manner, curtesying right and left, after the fashion of the times, and then instinctively seated herself beside the young matrons, who blushed and smiled at her pleasant greeting, while the elders gravely bent their heads and pursed up their mouths in a pious way. A silence of some minutes intervened, for the Lady Joanna was no unimportant personage to be present, and was well known for a smart dame, with ready wit, and sharp repartee, and though in her absence it might be politic to treat her with indifference or contempt, she being present altered the case; and even Mistress Bonyton, habituated to command, and accustomed to lead off her satellites in a free and easy manner, found herself inconveniently awed in her presence.

At length Mistress Bonyton, in a solemn voice, and with intermitting groans, grasping the Bible and closing her eyes, said:

"We have appropriated this afternoon for the especial purpose of praying for the conversion of that pleasant (groan) but ungodly (groan) man, Sir Richard Vines."

Mistress Vines started; her wifely face reddened with surprise, not unmingled with anger, and she replied promptly, with her bright eyes surveying the group:

"I thank ye, good dames, in that ye will pray for my noble lord; but, in what way has he earned the right to be called ungodly?"

"Our occasion is for the holding forth of prayer, not to discuss carnal questions," responded Mistress Bonyton.

"But indeed, good dame, let me know his offenses, that I may the better join in your prayers."

"It is not meet that we talk," interposed Dame Higgins; "thou art holding a chosen vessel, gifted in prayer, from the altar."

And at once the group arose, and each grasping the back of a chair, which they tilted upon two legs, Mistress Bonyton opened with a violent denunciation of the "sins of pride and haughtiness; of the hankering after the leeks and garlicks of Egypt, in the shape of Episcopacy; and the high head which portended a fall; and the crimpings and mincings, and titles and shows of aristocracy, a shame to the church here planted in the wilderness."

Mistress Vines quietly moved upon tip-toe to the door and went out, much flushed in the face, and most certainly carrying her pretty head quite as high as the prayer had indicated. She did not even wait for the "amen," but put the door between her and them, leaving Mistress Bonyton to her invective, which they called prayer.

As she tripped along, she met Sir Richard, who smiled when he saw her flashing eye, but he put her arm within his, smiled, and patted the hand that lay upon his arm, for he divined the cause.

"Ay, sweetheart, they do not look upon thy husband with thine eyes," and stooping his head to hers he whispered, with a boyish laugh, "heaven forefend that they should."

Whereat she laughed, and they passed onward to their happy home.

CHAPTER VI.

APOLLO AND DIANA.

FROM this time it became evident that a strong public opinion was gradually setting itself against the family. Mistress Vines, conceiving herself in point of birth and family superior to any other woman in the colony, might be pardoned some little haughtiness which so well became her handsome head, and being of a higher culture than her neighbors, it might not be surprising if some consciousness of it were apparent in her manners; but these petty traits weigh heavily on the minds of a people more ambitious than cultivated, and inclined to envy and jealousy, as the proud and ignorant are sure to be.

The wife and daughters of Captain Bonyton more especially conceived themselves aggrieved by the deportment of Mistress Vines, and though the captain exerted his utmost influence to allay the growing irritation, he was far from being successful, women being very apt to think that when they have made a matter the subject of prayer, they must necessarily be in the right. To these causes was added another nearer home: John Bonyton, the son and brother, had, from the first, shown himself not only interested in Hope Vines, but completely absorbed in her. Seeing this, outraged as they conceived themselves to have been by the mother, the undisguised devotion of John to Hope, "the impish creetur'," as they not unfrequently called her, was adding gall to bitterness.

John Bonyton was a bold, headstrong boy, such as the period and circumstances of a new and unsettled country would be likely to develop, but such as the rigid disciplinarians of the day would regard with little favor. It is well known that these iron-cast men and women must either break down the high spirits engendered by their own flesh and blood, and mental make, or be confronted by a spirit like their own, which nothing can quell but the maker of the spirit of man.

Tall and dark, the youth John Bonyton was handsome withal, reckless and roving; disinclined to toil, and expert in woodland sports, like Hope, he found better companionship with the natives of the forest, and dwellers in the wigwam, than in the more exact decorums of civilized society. Generous and daring, he was also tender to the gentler sex, even to a degree unwonted among the stern men who had found a refuge from persecution amid the wilds of the New World.

The unthrifty son, and the white-haired, dark-eyed daughter of Sir Richard Vines were considered one and inseparable. In the wildest woods, adown the deepest ravines, up the highest hills, and off by the sea-side, might be traced everywhere the footsteps of the strong, peril-loving children, and the silvery laugh of little Hope rung like the chimes of the wren-bird upon the air.

Nothing could be more wildly picturesque than the two—

he with his dark, flashing eyes and curling hair, athletic, and yet light and flexible as a young mountain sapling, armed with pouch and gun, and followed by a brace of hounds, his invariable companions, and the pretty Hope in her short, crimson-velvet frock, revealing feet arched, elastic and small, even for her diminutive figure, and molding the pointed shoe by its firm pressure. A light velvet cap surmounted her head, and bracelets of gems and strings of wampum intermingled upon her arms and girdle. Over these hung her abundant hair, like a silvery veil—rippling, wavy, and crisping into curls about her temples. She generally carried a bow and arrow in her hands, and was nothing loth to bring down a bird or arrest the flight of a rabbit in her pathway.

She was self-willed, like her companion; but while he was gentle always in her presence, she was capricious and always imperious, not scrupling to assert her claims with a high toss of her pretty head, and a stamp of the little foot. Full of health, and naturally courageous, danger rather allured than repelled her; living mostly in the open air, she was as clear of eye and firm of foot as a young stag.

Hope neither felt nor affected timidity in roaming the stormy sea-coast or climbing the wildest rocky crags. Her foot as readily and instinctively leaped, unaided, the blackest chasms, the rudest headlands, and the rockiest cliffs, as did that of her companion, and she walked onward, after achieving these feats, without comment or exultation.

In sailing over the Pool, or along the sea, John Bonyton gave her the rudder to steer as a matter of course, and if the wind were high, so they had recourse to the oar, Hope assumed one in the same manner.

Sir Richard's family were standing upon the piazza, watching the movements of Hope, who stood upon a slip of rock extending seaward, with oar in hand, and her hair tied in a knot under her chin. She had evidently determined upon a row to one of the islands in the distance, to which her companion objected, pointing to the masses of dark cloud rolling up from the sea, and the already dark purple hue of the waves in the lurid light of the gathering storm.

Mrs. Vines laughed as Hope gesticulated rapidly, and seizing the rope which held the boat, drew it in to land, and

sprung therein. Her companion could do no less than follow, and they were soon sailing down the harbor, the little boat careening heavily.

"Is she not a perfect little Puck, as our Indians call the wood-fairies?" said Mistress Vines.

"True, most true, sweetheart; but a fearful cloud, I fear, is gathering over our house. Say not a word, my brave wife, but we must go home. I hear that which chills me to the heart. Poor, dear, innocent little Hope! Ah! dame, when we hear of tortures inflicted upon others, we hardly realize their import till those we love are threatened therewith."

"They would not dare to touch a hair of her precious head," responded Mistress Vines.

"Indeed, they would, sweetheart; but we will leave them before their plans are matured; and first, we must send this headstrong boy abroad. He stays only to his and our ruin. Use that silvery tongue of thine, dame, to urge his departure."

"Ah! I see it all—we must abandon this dear Paradise of ours, where we have been so happy, and where our children were born, and go to a new land once more, and to a new people. Oh! my husband, my heart misgives me."

And she folded her two hands upon his shoulder, and bowed her head thereon, with a burst of tears.

CHAPTER VII.

A FAMILY CONCLAVE.

MISTRESS BONYTON sat with her daughters, busy with knitting-work and sewing, when Dame Higgins entered, with work in hand, to pass an hour in neighborly chat. Hardly were they seated, when in the distance were seen John Bonyton and Hope Vines casting their hooks into the sea, fishing; for from the point of rocks on which they stood, many a fine bass had been brought ashore.

Dame Higgins eyed Mistress Bonyton sharply; she was making a net, and as she drew the mesh home, the strong

twine snapped with a keen, biting sound, which seemed not unpleasant to the notable dame. Every time she knotted the mesh, she lifted her eyes and scrutinized the face of the hostess, as she drew the twine home.

"I think our brother John is certainly bewitched," said Perseverance Bonyton, to her sister, at the same time biting off the thread of the seam she had just completed.

Nancy, who had been addressed, was darning a pair of stockings, with a small yellow gourd inside to hold the parts in shape. She threaded the darning-needle, arranged the gourd, and commenced working before she spoke, and then her laconic answer was no more than :

"I shouldn't wonder !"

"My conscience, Nance, is that all you've got to say, after waiting so long to get it out?"

Nancy compressed her lips like one determined not to be provoked into speech, holding the stocking close to her breast, and passing the needle over and under the threads, weaving in a perfect piece of cloth. At last the rent was closed, and she held it up in triumph, saying :

"Back and forth, over and under ; not a thread lost. When a work is to be done, Perseverance, I can wait."

"And while we wait, John is every day more and more deluded."

"Did you ever notice that little spot, like a drop of blood, on the shoulder of Hope Vines?"

"It is plain enough to be seen," returned Perseverance, running up a long needleful of stitches upon a new seam.

"Did you ever see any natural-born, true human creature, with such fiery dark eyes, and black brows, and a head of white hair to make you think of the pale horse of the Revelations?" continued Nancy, remorselessly pricking in and out, over and under, her little web, and at each time wounding the yellow gourd.

"I never did, and I never want to see such another."

"Did you ever see a face that is as white as if every stain had been bleached out in the frost and snow—out all day, rain or shine, hot or cold, yet never browned, never burnt, while the two lips are like two red cherries?"

"You know, now, Nance, she is as handsome as any

pletter ; there's no getting over *that*, so don't spin out what you are going to say, but out with it."

" Well, then, if I must say it, here 'tis. I believe Hope Vines is a born devil—an incarnate imp, and that the soul of John is in jeopardy."

Mistress Bonyton had not removed her eyes from the pair fishing upon the rocks, and Dame Higgins had continued to knot mesh after mesh, twanging the knots, each one with a sharp bite, like a hiss, while the two girls pursued the above conversation in a low but querulous tone of voice.

" If that was a boy of mine, exposed to the snares of—of—a girl like that, Mistress Bonyton, I should go and call him in—a wise woman looketh well to the ways of her household."

For the first time Mistress Bonyton withdrew her eyes, and mechanically pursued her knitting, and she answered, with a somewhat sorrowful smile :

" If you had my son John to deal with, you would most likely have a good time calling."

" He is of no earthly use in the world, while that girl is about. I shall be glad when the vessel is ready to go." This from Perseverance.

" If I had my way, he shouldn't go at all, to fight agin' the parliament," was Nancy's response.

" Never you mind, gals ; there is more than one way to kill a cat."

And, as Mistress Bonyton said this, the click of her knitting-needles was like so many sharp stabs.

" Oh, yes, mother, but they are long a-dying," said Perseverance, tying a double knot in her thread, and digging her needle into her work.

Dame Higgins had been steadily tying the mesh after mesh of her net, drawing out the thread with a twang, and she now laid her hands in her lap, and looking Mistress Bonyton straight in the eye, said slowly :

" There will be no good come to this land, this church planted in the wilderness, till the heathen are rooted out ; root and branch must be destroyed, and all that deal with ' wizards that peep '—eh—and enchanters—eh—and witches—ah—and dealers in familiar spirits—eh—shall be cut off and wholly destroyed—eh—ye shall show them no mercy—eh."

This was said with a rising inflection of voice, and an indescribable sing-song drawl, which is ludicrous or impressive according as the sympathies of the hearer are for or against the speaker.

"That is what I call a good word and fitly spoken," cried Perseverance, throwing her work into the basket, and hugging herself fiercely with her two arms.

"That is coming to the point. Either there are witches or there are not. If there are no witches, then the Bible lies."

Perseverance contracted her brows, compressed her lips, and looked around like one who has started a *clinch*. Mistress Bonyton moved her knitting-needles with calmness and precision, and answered, slowly :

"My mind has been long greatly exercised on this point. I have seen much and held my peace, till my soul crieth out within me, and I will no longer be silent. I shall do my utmost to bring this question before the council. If my husband speaks, well and good ; if he forbears, the guilt be upon his own head. I shall clear my skirts by calling upon the Lord's people to purge the land."

"I was saying very nearly the same words to my son, Ephraim, last night," resumed Dame Higgins. "Ephraim is a devout youth, and a godly. I wish your son John, Mistress Bonyton, were more disposed to walk in the path he has chosen," and the dame drew the mesh-knot with a long, slow bite.

Mistress Bonyton straightened herself a trifle ; her maternal instinct had been touched, and she replied, a little tartly :

"It would need be a smart youth for my son to follow him. John has a way of his own ; but I like not a tame youth, which is most likely to be succeeded by a cowardly old age."

"True, true, Mistress Bonyton," for now Dame Higgins winced from the same cause. "I speak not in reprehension of your son John, but as in praise of my son Ephraim. He is not carnally disposed, and yet, Nancy, his eyes will turn too often of a Sabbath in your direction, and I have taken him to task therefor."

At this Perseverance gave Nancy a sly touch with the foot and the latter colored a little, just a small, decorous blush,

suitable to a staid spinster, for Ephraim was not likely to create any very fiery emotion.

"We are straying from the question in hand, gossip," said the hostess. "I learn, by the last arrivals from home, that the people are not only at their wits' end in the face of these civil commotions, but that in sundry places have broken out divers cases of witchcraft and possession, whereby the peace and safety of many devout persons has been greatly jeopardized!"

"Yea, yea, I have read thereof; it were a goodly thing if this young church in the wilderness, as yet little disturbed by heresies, should give the older one a lesson. What think you, mistress?"

Mistress Bonyton did not reply directly to the question, but laying her work in her lap, replied, slowly:

"At one time it was thought that your son Ephraim was falling into the snares of this—this—"

"Witch devil." Perseverance came thus to her mother's aid.

"Yea, it is most true. Ephraim sat day after day, like a—eh—like a sparrow upon the house-top—eh—lamenting."

Perseverance eyed Nancy with a malignant smile, whereat the latter, nothing daunted, replied:

"Many a godly youth has been led astray, but when he returns, and saith 'I have sinned,' it shall not be accounted to him."

"Thou art of a goodly speech, Nancy, and I thank thee," returned Dame Higgins.

"There, did you see that?" cried Perseverance, with a sudden start. "Upon my life, Hope Vines jumped off that cliff, the whole hight, and then walked home as if nothing had happened. No goat can do such a thing without help of some kind. I could swear I saw a shape holding her up—there—I am sure I did, and it ran toward the woods in the shape of a black cat."

All eyes were turned in the direction indicated, where most certainly was to be seen a harmless cat, making her way stealthily, in pursuit of birds—a black, crafty, cruel beast when intent on such game.

John Bonyton now entered with a fine bass, which he laid

upon the shelf. He bowed slightly to Dame Higgins, but, observing her work, expressed interest in its progress. It was wonderful how whist the four women became upon his entrance, which observing, he passed out again, saying, with a grave smile, which well became his handsome face :

"I am sure I nipped some woman's story in the bud by coming in, so I will even go, that ye may finish it," and he went out again, whereat Dame Higgins exclaimed :

"Ye surely put all your beauty into that boy, mistress, and saved little for your girls."

Both the girls pouted somewhat at this, but Perseverance hummed :

"What care I how black I be!
Forty pounds will marry me!"

And Dame Higgins soon after took her leave, followed to the door by Mistress Bonyton, who implored her to give no currency to their recent conversation.

"The time is not yet ripe," she continued. "The Governor is powerful, and Mistress Vines well esteemed. We must proceed with caution. John is not to be trifled with, as ye may judge, and his father is strong and willful. We must proceed only upon sure grounds."

Dame Higgins promised discretion, but she had several visits to pay that day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPIDER'S WEBS.

It was just midnight, and John Bonyton still paced the sands at the head of the Pool, striving in vain to wrest his thoughts from the one object of his devotion. At length, as the moon was lost in the west, he turned wearily homeward, with that vague unrest with which persons turn to a disagreeable location. Emerging from a grove of pines, he observed a figure leaning against the bole of one of these, with head drooping upon its breast.

"What do you here, Acashee?" he asked, coldly, as he stood before her.

"Think of John Bonyton."

"I like it not, Acashee. I like it not. Thou art beautiful—thou art bright, and full of power. Go seek a chief of thy tribe best worthy of thee, and pursue me no more."

"I AM beautiful, John Bonyton. Fresh, and strong, and straight as the mountain-ash. I am fit to mother heroes, John Bonyton, and you turn from me to love a girl small as the rabbit compared with the panther."

She approached him; she laid her slender wrist upon his arm, and looked into his face with her dark eyes, that had a serpent fascination in them, while her parted coral lips showed the small white teeth, and gave an indescribable seductiveness to her person.

John Bonyton shook off her hand sternly.

"Go, Acashee. It is not becoming the daughter of a great chief to seek the love of the white man."

And he turned away.

Acashee's face flushed with rage, but she did not follow him. In a low, soft voice she called:

"Come back, John Bonyton, I have something of which to speak."

He returned, and again she laid her slender wrist upon his arm, and he could feel the pulse leap in its little round.

"Bethink thee, John Bonyton, thy people condemn thee; Sir Richard Vines will not give thee his daughter, or if he did, the Great Spirit will not suffer Hope Vines to wed!"

"What mean you?"

"She is set apart; she is a diviner of secrets, a prophet of the future. Such are reserved for the good of the people."

Bonyton laughed with scorn, and replied:

"You speak your wish, Acashee. Hope shall yet be my wife. Go, and let us meet no more."

The girl ground her teeth with rage as she saw him ready to leave her, but she resumed, with a soft voice and seductive smile, detaining him gently by the hand.

"Come to our people, John Bonyton; come, and be a great chief, and command a thousand warriors; come, and all the tribes of the east will bow down to the great chief, who has married the wisest and most beautiful woman of the red-men. Come, and Acashee will deck your wigwam; she who is proud

as the eagle to the approaches of others, shall coo like the wood-pigeon in the ears of him who has moved the soul of the red maiden, and made her like the timid fawn—she who has been proud as the eagle upon the rock.”

She spoke at first with pride, gradually softening her tones to a tender, caressing beseechingness, which might have been dangerous to one less steadfast than John Bonyton.

“Cease, I beseech thee, Acashee. I have no choice but to love Hope Vines.”

“Listen to what I tell you,” she cried, fiercely. “Hope Vines shall not be your wife while the sea rolls, or the sun shines. She shall be burned for a witch. She shall know what it is to bring the blush of shame and the blight of scorn upon the cheek of Acashee.”

With a wild look of rage and malevolence, she dashed into the forest.

Her language was not lost upon Bonyton, who recalled many words and incidents which confirmed him in the belief that danger impended over Hope Vines, and the threat, “She shall be burned for a witch,” had a fearful significance.

Meanwhile, Acashee pursued her way homeward, half in doubt whether she should forward the plans of the women of the colony, who, she was well aware, designed to denounce Hope as a witch, or whether she should aid her own people in their scheme to abduct her, in their belief that she would prove a great medicine-woman, or priestess.

With these views, many a council had been held to devise the most favorable method of securing her person, while at the same time no indignity, no distress or injury should afflict the sweetness of her soul. While the women of the Pilgrim faith were devising means to degrade and torture this tender child of genius, this nightingale smothered in its own sweets, these children of the woods were intent only to raise her to the highest pitch of reverence and devotion.

Upon reaching home, Acashee found that circumstances were favoring her designs against Hope, even beyond her expectations; for a council was already convened whose object was to secure her person. Acashee, though not allowed to be seated in council, was too wise and too much respected to

be excluded therefrom; hence, she leaned against a tree behind her father, and listened.

"For many years the corn failed us, and the venison was poor; the fish showed their dead white bellies all along the sea-shore; the burial-places of our people were heaped with our dead; and then came these pale-faces!"

Thus commenced a white-haired chief, recalling the misfortunes of his people.

"Our medicine-men, our prophets, foretold their coming," returned another.

"Yes, my brother, and they foretold the ruin of the tribes. I see already our people fading, fading, like the mist as the sun comes up."

"Why look only at black omens, my father? Maybe the pale-faces have brought to us one who can show us how to avert the calamities of our people."

Acashee started forward like a young panther at these words of her father, and exclaimed:

"Thou hast well said, my father."

Samoset lifted his hand and waved his daughter back; then he said, in a low voice, meant for her ear alone:

"The net-weaver is keen and subtle; let her beware, or she may be caught in her own trap."

"What is Wa-ain (white soul) to me? Do I not seek the prophet-voice of our people?"

Samoset's eyes flashed fire upon the girl; he rose to his feet and motioned her to follow, saying, as he went:

"Does the squaw hope to deceive a chief? Do I not know thee? Do I not know that Hope Vines is to thee what the hazel is to the rattlesnake? Go thy ways, lest I condemn thee to the hoe and the paddle."

Samoset loved Hope with a paternal tenderness and a religious reverence; and when he sought to secure her as a prophet, it was in accordance with these sentiments only, and he resolved to protect her from the animosity which he so well read in the mind of his imperious daughter. Returning to the council at length, he was ready to adopt measures to secure her person, and therefore listened to the reasons assigned for their belief in her supernatural gifts.

"Hardly do her feet touch the earth," said a chief. "Her

hair is the pearly hue of the spirit-land, fair as the snowy mist when the evening star nestles beside the young moon. Her eyes seek the stars, and like the eagle's, penetrate the midday sun—she is a waif from the spirit-land. Her own people would subject her to toil, or to their foolish arts—they do not understand her. We see in her the gift of the Great Spirit—let us take her to worship.”

This speech was received with approval, and many were the devices suggested to accomplish this object. The chief turned to Samoset.

“Thy daughter is wise; she understands Wa-ain; let her be called.”

At a signal, Acashee approached with her hands folded, and with humble, downcast eyes, for the threat of her father had terrified her. She stood behind him in silence.

“Will it break the heart of Wa-ain to take her from her kind? Will she learn to forget them?”

Acashee shook her head.

“Speak, my daughter,” said her father.

“Wa-ain has no heart; she will forget all but one.”

The chiefs exchanged significant glances.

“When that one is hidden from her eyes she will forget; she hears in him the lost voices of the land of perpetual spring. When he is gone, the voices now lost will come to her ear.”

Acashee glanced furtively at her father, and then said:

“Who will look to the comfort of Wa-ain?—who will spread the skins for her couch, and provide the fine food for her lips? She can not live like an Indian girl.”

“The old chief will provide, my daughter,” answered Samoset, a grim smile crossing his features, for, proud as he was of his daughter, he knew well the cruelty of her heart, and he would not trust Hope to her keeping. He continued:

“John Bonyton goes over the great water; he goes to fight in behalf of the great English father—we shall see him no more.”

In spite of her Indian nerves, Acashee trembled and turned pale at this announcement.

“How shall we obtain the person of Wa-ain? Shall we wait till John Bonyton is gone?” she at length asked.

“Unfold thy purpose, daughter,” said Samoset.

Acashee saw that her father read her mind clearly—knew the hatred she bore to Hope Vines—knew of a something, which was not hate, that made her heart throb at the name of John Bonyton—knew that he saw how the abduction of the girl would work out her own revenge. She answered, at length, in a clear, low voice :

“Wa-ain loves the games and festivals of the tribes ; what hinders that she should join in a dance before the departure of John Bonyton ?”

“Why before his departure ?” This from her father.

“Because, when he is gone, Wa-ain will no more be seen abroad ; like the wood-pigeon, she will seek the deepest shades, and thence go to the spirit-land.”

The council was prolonged still further, but at length the hint of Acashee was accepted, and it was resolved to induce Hope to join the Indians in one of their annual festivals, in the progress of which it would be easy to so far remove her from observation, that a few trusty agents could carry her far beyond the reach of her own people.

Acashee retired, glad to hide her exultation at this plan to separate the lovers, from the penetrating eye of her father.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATAL DANCE.

To have separated John Bonyton from Hope Vines would by no means have satisfied the malignant passions at work in the bosom of Acashee, who now aimed at the destruction of her rival, whom she would subject to a bodily torture commensurate with the jealous pangs which gnawed at her own vitals.

At the earliest dawn she made her way to the settlement, and sought out the principal leaders in the church, and, by startling revelations coupled with subtle suggestions of impending danger to the colony, through the instrumentality of

evil spirits, who were to use Hope Vines as a medium, she so wrought upon their superstitious fears as to induce them to send to Boston and procure commissioners to examine into the case.

It was agreed that all should be kept a profound secret, till the commissioners should arrive, when Hope should be brought up for examination, and subjected to certain ordeals believed sufficient to test the certainty of her complicity with evil and dangerous spirits of the lower world.

Thus, while Hope, careless of the future, and easily pleased in the present, lived as the lilies do in their white loveliness, without care for the morrow, two sources of deadly peril were unconsciously hanging over her.

John Bonyton, also, despising the petty malice of his family, and superior to the superstitious belief of the colonists, treated their hints and inuendoes with contempt, or in fiery anger declared he would bring the whole race of savages from the St. Croix to the Saco to punish an injury to a thread of hair upon the head of Hope Vines.

Sir Richard Vines, with a clear, calm eye, saw that danger was at hand, and secretly made preparations to abandon a colony which he had planted with so many hopes, and seen to advance in wealth and importance.

The days of which we write were not days of feasting and merry-making, but of long, gloomy asceticism, in which men plunged into abstruse theological disquisitions with a zest and earnestness which we, in our days of easy tolerance, can hardly conceive. In England, the fires of Smithfield were not long quenched, and had been succeeded by the persecution of poor, helpless, infirm creatures, whom the ignorance or malignity of their neighbors accused of witchcraft. The arbitrary measures of Charles the First had roused into fearful action the whole middling classes of England, a class disposed to moodiness, and it may be envy of the more prosperous and volatile class then in the ascendant. All these subjects of interest abroad found a reflex in the New World, where the grandeur of the old primeval woods, the silence and solitude surrounding the scattered colonists, augmented the natural gloom of asperity and religious fervor.

The family of Sir Richard Vines, more cheerful and more

allied to the Cavalier than Roundhead interests of England, found themselves looked upon with distrust upon more grounds than one, by their more religiously exacting compatriots, whose sympathies were, without any disguise, on the side of Cromwell and the parliament.

The people of the colony met almost daily for prayer and exhortation, which became a grim sort of relaxation and amusement to them. Young and old affected religious fervor, till it became the habit of the mind, to the exclusion of the more social and genial aspects of human intercourse.

The ship was now ready for sailing which was to convey John Bonyton to a distant shore, and inaugurate with him a broader sphere of life and action. He had, with the natural enthusiasm of youth and courage, dwelt upon the change before him, till already he had grasped the pinnacle of renown and achieved wealth and manly distinction. His bearing assumed a nobleness accordant with his new-born aspirations, and few had ever beheld a handsomer youth.

Sir Richard Vines looked upon him with almost paternal pride, and then his eye would rest mournfully upon little Hope, whose future was so shadowy, dim, and unearthly in its promise.

The day before the ship was to take her departure for England, Sir Richard had determined to give a festival in honor of John Bonyton, to which he had been invited, and all of every rank and condition made welcome.

Accordingly the house was thrown open to all comers. Indians were there from the far north and east, who looked upon John Bonyton as the ideal of a young brave, and came to bid him a sorrowful farewell.

The rustic games of old England were revived upon the lawn. There were feats of wrestling and of the race, leaping and lifting—in all of which John Bonyton showed himself expert beyond his fellows. Even the older, austere exiles from fatherland looked on at first in tolerance and finally in sympathy, as thoughts of their own youth and prowess returned, and more than one of the elders joined in the amusements of the day.

At length there approached from the woods a group of Indians, bravely equipped in belt and feathery robe, and led on

by music peculiar to themselves, but not unlike that of the castinet. The group divided right and left, and a phantom of beauty bounded forward into the center of the lawn.

She was habited in a soft, white dress composed of wool, reaching little below the knee. It was ample in fold and gathered loosely at the waist by a girdle of wampum. The edge of the robe was ornamented with a fringe of purple shells, which tinkled at the slightest movement, and the round, uncovered arms, and the ankles cased in silken hose, were decorated with circlets of the same shells. The top of the moccasins was fringed like the robe. Masses of hair were folded in braids around the small, faultlessly-shaped head, surmounted by a tuft of feathers from the wing of the black eagle.

The fair vision raised her arms in concord with the music, and lifted her resplendent eyes upward as she moved from side to side, now in slow, measured curves, and now in rapid steps across the arena, and anon bending in those genuflexions which indicate the religious dance.

A brief space, and another form, taller and of darker hue, habited in a similar style of dress, but of a rich, crimson color and fringed with shells of a pearly whiteness, and her long, black braids intermingled with white shells, joined the graceful dancer. Then a tall figure, crowned with feathers of the war-eagle, and armed with bow and arrow, a perfect impersonation of the golden-bright Apollo, bounding and leaping, and shouting a low melody, entered.

Poised lightly upon one foot, with eyes intently fixed upward, he drew an arrow to the head, and then, sinking upon one knee, watched the flight of the feathered messenger.

With upraised arms, and eyes lifted to the blue sky, the dancers disappeared, and it needed no one to say that the two girls were Hope Vines and Acashee, and the young Apollo of grace and beauty was John Bonyton. The dance was that of the Hunter's Moon.

In spite of the festive scene, Sir Richard and his family became conscious that a certain restraint, an aspect of gloom, began to pervade the occasion; the Indian guests were partially grave and preoccupied; the older colonists were moody and silent; only the younger persons assembled seemed to enter with zest into the amusements of the day.

This gloom was rather heightened than diminished by the dance, which we have described, when it was observed that two grave and venerable men, and strangers, were ushered with much form and ceremony into the assembly. These were no other than Richard Mather and John Partridge, men eminent for their learning and piety, and who were known to have expressed strong opinions in regard to the doctrine of witchcraft, which had of late employed the royal pen of James, King of England.

These men disapproved altogether of the festivities before them, and the dance was no less than an "abomination of abominations." With hands folded into the loose cuffs of their long, black coats, and plain, white band under the thin, gray beard of each, they sat perfectly motionless and without the slightest change of feature, and watched the dance. They never moved their eyes from the figure of Hope, and gradually as they gazed, a slight flush overspread their pale features, and their lips were coldly and firmly compressed.

Scarcely had the steps of Hope turned to depart, when Dr. Mather sprung to his feet, and, in a loud, authoritative voice, cried out:

"Seize that imp of Satan, that Jezebel, that witch, and bring her hither."

"What mean you?" cried Sir Richard. "How dare you apply such terms to a child of mine?"

"Dare? dare? Sir Richard, we shall see what we dare." And Dr. Mather turned away.

Meanwhile Hope had joined, with a gay laugh, the group of archers, and drawing her arrow to the head, cut the center of the mark. A shout rung on every side at this careless and triumphant feat, and she was about to cross the lawn, when she was rudely seized by two officers of the law.

Indignant at the hands laid upon her person, Hope struck right and left with her bow and arrows, and for a moment regained her freedom, and sprung toward the house. She glanced fearfully around, and saw only fierce, malignant faces scowling upon her, and heavy stones raised to arrest her flight. Active and courageous, seeing her way homeward obstructed, she turned with lightning speed in the direction of the Pool, into which she was about to plunge, when she

was caught in the arms of an Indian, who bore her rapidly into the forest.

"Put me down, Kinneho—put me down; I will walk. Only save me from those fierce, bad men. Where is John Bonyton? Call him—call him, I say, Kinneho."

But the Indian made her no reply. He gathered her slight form in his arms as if it had been that of a child, and plunged into the deepest recesses of the forest, above the Saco Falls, where the place of rendezvous had been appointed. In vain Hope tore out masses of her hair, and scattered them along her path. In vain she essayed to call; the chief firmly but not rudely, laid his hand upon her mouth, and enjoined silence.

CHAPTER X.

IN VAIN.

MEANWHILE all was distress and confusion in the family of Sir Richard Vines, who, indignant at the language of Richard Mather, and not supposing his daughter in any immediate danger, had confronted her accusers with a demand for the instant withdrawal of the offensive words.

Mistress Vines had witnessed the attempt to arrest Hope, and was hastening to her side when she beheld her running, as we have seen, in the direction of the Pool. She now, with loud cries and frantic gestures, joined her husband, and all descended the bank in search of the lost child.

Following the side of the water, where the thick underbrush might completely conceal a person beneath, they called Hope by every expression of endearing tenderness, but no response came.

"She but hides herself, sweetheart; be comforted. She hides herself in terror. She will soon be home."

But his pale, anxious face gave the lie to his consoling words.

"Look here, dame—sweetheart, look! Here is a lock of her hair; we shall soon find her." And in his sudden sense

of relief, he threw the tress over the neck of John Bonyton. He continued, to the latter :

"Make ready for thy voyage, lad. All will be well. They dare not lay a finger upon her precious head. I will defend her with all the power of the colony, and call in the Indians if need be. Hope has not the heart to say good-by. The dear lamb is terrified, and sick at heart. I will avenge the indignity put upon us by these hypocrites ! In faith, I will, and we will all meet in England, dear John, and forget this day."

Thus did the stout man strive to ease his own heart, and stifle back its terrible misgivings.

The little ship, of scarcely two hundred tons, rocked in the offing, and the not unmusical "Yo-heave-oh !" of the sailors, as they weighed the anchor, and shook out the sails, admonished young Bonyton that it was time for him to go on ship-board. The youth still lingered, and cast many a wistful look at the high rocks and dense forests, in the vain expectation of seeing Hope make her appearance.

"My mind misgives me that all is not well with Hope," he whispered in the ear of Sir Richard.

"Nay, my son, she has been frightened ; she hides herself rather than say farewell. Do not heed it. I will write thee that all is well by the next ship. I would have thee away from this people, also," he added, in a lower tone.

The youth hardly noticed this kindly outbreak, which, at another time, would have awakened affectionate gratitude, but he still lingered and looked. He took the cap from his head, and shaded his eyes therewith. The fine, freshening breeze lifted the curls from his brow, and showed its whiteness ; but now it was too pale, and contracted sharply, making a heavy dent between the eyes.

The white sails were set, the anchor weighed, the wherry grated upon the sand, and impatient voices urged him to embark ; and yet John Bonyton lingered. His foot was on the gunwale of the boat ; the sailors lifted their oars, when suddenly he started back, waved his hand for them to go, and exclaimed :

"No, by heavens ! I will not leave, uncertain of her fate !"

There were adjurations and remonstrances innumerable. The vessel waited; Sir Richard implored; it was in vain.

"I will not go—stand off!" he at length cried, pushing the people aside right and left, and making his way with long strides to the Vines mansion.

Mistress Vines, in a burst of maternal tenderness, threw her arms about his neck.

"Oh, my son! my beautiful boy! where is Hope? Where is Hope?" she cried.

The young man lifted her arms from his neck, and looked fiercely round.

"Have you hidden her away from me? Tell me truly. Let no one dare deceive me."

At this moment his sister Nancy appeared, and going up to him, said:

"I'm ashamed of you, John Bonyton, I am."

The youth glanced at her. It was evident he was nearly beside himself. He seized her by the arm, and shook her long, thin hands.

"I have heard your talk. I have heard you tell of the 'witch test,' on the shoulder of Hope. Go to; if a hair of her head is injured, woe to you and such as you!"

And he pushed her from the door.

In the mean time the vessel departed; the alarm for Hope spread; the whole village was in arms, and people went here and there in wild conjectures. Whatever might have been the feelings of Mistress Bonyton, it was observed that she did not leave her high-backed, flag-bottomed chair, but, with a handkerchief thrown over her head, leaned back, and ever and anon she was heard to crone, in a quavering voice and dismal tone:

"My heart is like a wilderness;
There the wild raven finds her nest,
And there the screeching owl."

The door opened, and Dr. Mather and Mr. Partridge entered, and seated themselves beside her. Gradually the room filled with the people of the settlement, who regarded Mistress Bonyton as at the head of the movement against Hope Vines.

While all conversed in a suppressed tone, Dr. Mather

inquired as to the habits of Hope and the probabilities of her whereabouts.

While thus engaged, John Bonyton stalked into the room, and stood in the midst, eying the group with a stern glance. Through his clenched teeth he addressed the two learned men, who so confidentially talked with his mother.

"And so ye come a hundred miles or more to persecute a simple child—a poor girl who has provoked the ire of these fiends in human shape!"

"Beware, young man, that you do not bring trouble upon yourself by this intemperate speech," answered Mather, with compressed lips.

"Oh! I understand your tiger thirst for blood."

He strode across the room, and laying his hand upon his mother's shoulder, demanded, thus:

"Tell me where she is, mother. You and these men know; tell me where you have hidden her. Oh, mother! mother! bring not my blood upon your shoulders by concealing her from me, for, as true as there is a God in heaven, if these men, these bloodthirsty hypocrites, whom you, you, mother, have brought here to ruin Hope, harm a hair of her head, I will visit my wrath upon them in a way that shall cause the stoutest heart to faint. Speak, mother, speak, and tell me the worst."

The mother could not resist this appeal. She sprung forward and fainted in his arms.

There were ejaculations of pity, and cries of shame, and the ordinary tumult sure to ensue when a woman faints, in the midst of all which John Bonyton stood with folded arms. It was sad to see the work of a few hours upon the face of the handsome youth; it had hardened into that inexorable expression which time gives to those who have greatly endured.

"Once more I ask, know you aught of Hope Vines? Speak but one word, mother!"

"I know not where she is, John. For thy sake, I wish it were otherwise."

Again John Bonyton went forth, and the people turned aside reverently to let him pass, for they saw the great grief upon him. And now he wandered along the pool, for many

surmised that the poor child, in her terror, might have perished there.

Thus days and nights passed away, and the unhappy youth traversed the forest, and searched the sea; but found no more traces of Hope Vines.

CHAPTER XI.

“DESERTED ARE THE DWELLINGS OF MOINA.”

It has been shown how easily Hope Vines had been seized, even in the presence of her friends; for the two conspiracies against her—that of the Pilgrims to seize her person and arraign her for witchcraft, when death, in its most appalling shape, would undoubtedly have awaited her, and that of the Indians, who wished to exalt her as a wild-wood sibyl—produced so many and conflicting movements, that attention was divided, and the unhappy girl fell an easy victim to the snares of her captors.

Once securely in their hands, she was conveyed to one of their great magicians, who, by spells and enchantments, with which the tribes, from time immemorial, had been familiar, soon consigned her to a long, deep sleep.

Placed upon skins of the finest and purest texture, spread upon a wicker-frame which swung lightly between poles carried by sure-footed runners, Hope was borne away into the pathless wood, with no chance for rescue.

The Indians came and went among the colonists, but so well did they preserve their native immobility of feature, and reticence of tongue, that no suspicion was attached to them. With one exception, the old group of visitors was unchanged. Samoset, the crafty and experienced chief, eluded all questions, and even joined in the search; but his daughter, Acashee, no more frequented her old haunts; she dared not encounter the fiery glances of John Bonyton, who, she well knew, would couple the disappearance of Hope with her own hatred and revenge.

Slowly, fearfully passed the days; there were no tidings of Hope Vines. Days grew into months, and these into years, and yet she came not, and the beautiful, white-haired child, whose looks had been forever associated with the fate of Walter Raleigh, in the minds not only of his kinsmen, but of the colonists at large, grew to be a tale of the olden time.

Threads of her long, soft, silvery hair were looked upon as sacred relics. The fearful charge of witchcraft, which the elders would have preferred against her, awakened only recollections of reprehension, and people recalled nothing but her rare loveliness and her bright, poetic fancies, which rendered her

“A thing of beauty, and a joy forever.”

There were those who remembered those wonderful eyes of hers, so deep, so bright, and yet so foreboding, oftener fixed upon the skies than upon the earth, and these believed her white locks might be seen mingling with the mist of the Pool, and that her sweet body mingled with its perpetual ebb and flow.

Others, remembering her weird, supernatural beauty, and the attempts made by the Terrentines to obtain possession of her person, believed she still lived among them, secreted in some solitary cave, or mountain gorge, where her oracles inspired their chiefs to great deeds, and helped the women to courage and magnanimity. Little Hope was fast fading into the dim obscurity of fable and romance.

The family of Sir Richard Vines, never popular, as we have shown, with their austere neighbors, gradually withdrew themselves from all intercourse with them. Mistress Vines conceived the idea that the Bonytons and others had practiced upon poor Hope some of those terrible ordeals designed to ascertain her complicity with witchcraft, and, the ordeal having proved fatal to the victim, her death, and the tortures by which it had been accomplished, were doomed to be held a profound secret.

This idea she never relinquished, nor was she over careful in expressing her surmises, and the consequence was, a double share of animosity was visited upon the unhappy household. Acts of secret malignity were not unfrequent, and the situation of the family grew yearly more uncomfortable, till at

length Sir Richard determined to leave a people by whom he was so little appreciated, and so little understood.

He found himself losing that hardihood and elasticity, which had once made peril and adventure like a bugle-call to his vigorous and buoyant spirit. He found himself wandering with John Bonyton about mountain and forest and dell, yearning with indescribable sorrow over the loss of one whose life had been so free from all that could elicit displeasure; whose simple affections and poetic fancies resembled some beautiful sprite, conjured by the poet's dream, rather than a being of everyday life.

But it was upon John Bonyton that the blow most fearfully told, and upon him were most permanently affixed the ineffaceable marks of a life-long sorrow.

Mistress Bonyton had, from a miscalculation of her own maternal proclivities, as we have before intimated, prepared herself remorselessly to weave a fatal net around Hope Vines, caring less for the influence of Hope upon her son than did the rest of her family—her principal motive being to humble the pride of Mistress Vines, and punish her for some little neglect or discourtesy from which she conceived herself aggrieved.

But when Hope really disappeared—when no clue could really be found to her whereabouts, and when she saw her favorite son cut down and broken-hearted at the uncertainty of her fate, her womanly nature struggled through the crust of years and a warped intellect, and she was overwhelmed with remorse and regret.

Seeing the young man seated alone upon "Bass Rock," where he and Hope had so often pursued their sport, and where she had once watched the two with fascinated interest, she laid aside her knitting, and, casting a shawl over her shoulders, went forth to talk with him, and console him, if she could.

The youth saw her approach, and waved her back; but she pressed forward, saying:

"Oh! my son, let me speak to you—comfort you, if I can."

He looked her coldly, sternly in the eye.

"Mother, are you free from all blame in this? Know you nothing of her fate?"

"Nothing—as there is a God in heaven, I know nothing."

"Oh, mother! mother! there is still blood upon your skirts. I have heard your talk. It may be she has escaped a worse death by her present fate!"

"What mean you, my son?"

She was pale and trembling; she knew well the meaning of his words.

"You know what I mean. A curse upon a people who forget the ties of blood, and the claims of humanity, to gratify an idle spleen, and call it religion!"

"These are strong words to me, John."

"What have you said? what vile calumnies have you set afloat, mother? You would have taken that innocent child—that pure, harmless baby—that little incarnated spirit of helpless girlhood—and have given her over to the brutes in human shape, to torture, and drown, and burn, and hang, as they are now doing in Europe. This you would have done."

The woman crouched down on the rock before her own child, condemned, humiliated. He had revealed her to herself, and she trembled before him.

"Go, mother, go! I have not slept beneath your roof since I learned this. I never shall again. Better the bare rock and the cold mountain dew than to dwell with hypocrites and murderers."

"John, do not curse me; do not leave my gray hairs to sorrow, to death."

"I curse you not. Oh, mother, there is no love, no kindness in the hearts of these people."

"Only conform to them, John—only be one of them, and you will find every heart open to receive you."

"Never—never, mother! I know what they had designed to inflict upon Hope Vines. Had she lived—had she been here, and a hand been laid upon her, the blood that would have followed would be upon your head, not mine."

He lifted himself up and strode away, leaving the conscience-stricken woman to weep and wring her hands alone. Her daughter came and bore her home, but Mistress Bonyton was no more the proud, scheming woman she once had been. If Mistress Vines wept for her daughter, Mistress Bonyton was made to shed more bitter tears at the alienation of her son.

Sometimes the latter, in his long days and weeks' search

for the lost girl, abandoned the settlement altogether, and lived in the wigwams of the simple savages, who did all in their power to comfort and console him. The Saco tribe was no less ignorant than the colonists of the fate of Hope, but they saw how grief had stricken him down, and in their true hearts they felt a human compassion which might well have been emulated by those of his own kind, but was not.

The young man was convinced in his more serene moments that Hope had fallen a victim to the snares of Acashee, or the Spider. He recalled her words, "You had a friend; you have a foe," and he felt the secret of her fate was known fully to the Terrentines. Moody and taciturn, he wandered along the sea-shore, traversed the pathless woods, and watched the setting stars from solitary mountain heights. Sometimes he would appear in the Vines mansion, where he would for hours stealthily scan the faces of its inmates, and then depart with a groan.

"Gone, gone, and not a face is left to look like little Hope!"

At length the great Hall of Sir Richard Vines was closed forever, and the owner abandoned a colony which had become endeared to him by so many labors and sorrows, and which to him still bore the phantom presence of little Hope. He removed his household gods to the island of Barbadoes, with which he had hitherto associated himself in commercial transactions.

Here we must bid adieu to the courtly household, which is no longer associated with the history of our country, but which, in their new home, became comparatively happy and most prosperous.

Mistress Vines grew at length calm under her bereavement, and learned to say, in the meek spirit of religious love and divine faith, "Thy will be done."

More than two hundred years have passed away since the princely dwelling was left to decay, but some traces of the old residence of a courtly household may still be found.

We hear the location sometimes called "Old Orchard," because here are found fruit-trees heavy with the moss of age, and vines struggling for life amid the indigenous plants, fair exotics lost and overwhelmed by time.

CHAPTER XII.

A MAN OF METTLE.

YEARS rolled away, but they brought no peace to the mind of John Bonyton.

His was not the mind to bend to the storm, and extract submission from the precepts of Christianity, or that calm philosophy which learns at length to submit to the inevitable.

He brooded upon his loss day and night; he never again entered the roof of his father. Knowing the atrocious plan concocted beneath it, of charging Hope with witchcraft, he could not endure the sight of those whose cruelty he abhorred, and whose hypocrisy was too apparent to be excused.

Finding no sympathy with the colonists, he finally entirely estranged himself from them, and passed his whole time with the Saco Indians. Their simple truth, their loyalty to a friend, no less than their hatred to a foe, harmonized with the broad shades of his own character, and he learned a peace with them which his own people denied him.

Gradually his higher intelligence, his daring courage, his contempt of danger, hardship and death, so won their admiration that he was elected sagamore, or chief. Thus did these primitive people recognize the essential manhood of John Bonyton; thus did they trust him, submit their interests to his keeping, and look up to him as one worthy of all reverence.

Once they besought him to select one of the fairest of their maidens to wife; but when he showed them that the wounds of his heart could never heal, they said no more.

The colonists resented this departure of one of their members from civilized usages, and visited the career of John Bonyton with the utmost acrimony of Puritanical persecution. They looked upon him as wholly given over to Satan, and unentitled to the ordinary claims of human sympathy or human fellowship.

Always a contemner of forms, after his election of sagamore to the tribe, John Bonyton refused any submission to

the constituted authority of the colony, which sought in vain to seduce him to the condition of good citizenship. Being called upon to take the oath of allegiance to the colony, he refused, on the ground of his connection with the Saco tribe, whose interests he represented.

The relentless colonists pronounced a decree of outlawry upon the unhappy man, and set a price upon his head.

To these colonial persecutions were superadded those of town and church; so that, but for his faithful friends and allies, the Sacos, the situation of the high-spirited youth would have been miserable in the extreme; but his own indomitable will and fierce assertion of personal independence bore him above hardships and persecutions which would have paralyzed a man of less mettle.

John Bonyton never skulked in by-places to avoid his enemies, but openly confronted them, walking into the town bravely, accoutered in his demi-savage costume, and haughtily bowing to soldier, civilian, or priest, who might be seen with pale lips turning the first corner to avoid the fiery eye of the hanghty sagamore.

After the price had been put upon his head, John Bonyton might have been seen making his way at the early twilight of a winter day, to the house of the acting Governor of the colony, Thomas Gorges.

The family were engaged in singing the evening hymn, when a loud rap responded to the last note of the singers. The Governor opened the door in person, for he detected cowardice upon the faces of those nearest the window. John Bonyton stood erect, with rifle in hand, and spoke slowly and distinctly:

"I am John Bonyton, Sagamore of Saco. What will you give *me* for my head, Governor?"

"How many of your tribe do you carry at your back, John?"

"Not one; I am alone."

"Then I must say you are a foolhardy man, John, and I warn you to depart. God forbid I should be instrumental in shedding your blood."

"Hear me, Thomas Gorges. I shall go as I came, and no man will *dare* lay his hand upon me. Mark me, sir: the shot that lays John Bonyton in the dust will be the signal

for the brand, the arrow, and the scalping-knife to fall heavily upon every man, woman and child in this colony. I have warned you."

He went as he came, alone, and no man dared, as he said, to molest him. These visits he repeated at all times, day or night, till the cross nurse stilled the fretful child by fear of the Sagamore of Saco. So far from being subject to fear for his own life, John Bonyton became a terror to the people of Saco, who never ventured to put any of their edicts against him in execution.

Chief, as he was, of a Pagan tribe, John Bonyton nevertheless felt, or affected to feel, an interest in and need of Christian worship, which he did not fail to gratify when the interests of the tribe permitted him to be absent.

While in the porch of the sacred edifice was pasted up a reward, and an ample one, to whomsoever would bring to the Governor the head of the handsome outlaw, one clear summer morning, the inhabitants being assembled for worship, John Bonyton walked in and read the "Notice" in a clear voice, audible to the people inside, who trembled in their boots. He then stuck a flint-headed arrow through the paper, and walked half-way up the central aisle of the little church.

The minister was at prayer; but being an intrepid man, and accustomed to take a peep now and then through his closed lids, he did so on this occasion, and the prayer, ordinarily an hour in length, was greatly abridged.

There stood John Bonyton, rifle in hand, tall, dark, and defiant.

As the minister said "amen," the women sunk into their seats, but the men remained standing, for it was the custom in that early age and country for the people to stand in prayer—not to kneel, as the reverent will, nor to sit, as the indolent do.

There was a brief pause, and the minister said:

"John Bonyton, what is your will in this place?"

"To worship God," was the brief reply.

"Know you not that a price has been set upon your head, and any man has the right to kill you?"

"Yea, I know it."

There was a clatter of fire-locks, and a stir of heavy feet,

for every man carried his musket into the house of God in those days, and worshiped armed to the teeth.

John Bonyton cast a fiery eye over the assemblage, and waved his hand.

"Tell your people to sit down. I shall stand."

The minister gave the signal, and the congregation became seated.

"Come up here, John Bonyton, and sit by me. God forbid that you should be slain, as was Joab, grasping the horns of the altar."

"Thomas Jenner, I pray thee proceed with thy ministrations; no man will lay hand upon me. You pray and preach; I will listen to you."

Whereat the Rev. Mr. Jenner gave the people a sermon, which lasted two hours of that hot, midsummer day, in which he enlarged upon the duty of every man, who had come into this new Canaan to plant here the Ark of the Covenant of God, to hold himself in readiness to drive out the heathen, root and branch, as the Israelites of old were commanded to do, when they crossed the Jordan into the promised land, and failing in which, the Jews brought down upon themselves the judgment of an offended Leader and Judge, even the Most High God.

Fierce looks and angry glances lighted upon the head of John Bonyton, but he moved nor hand nor foot, nor turned away his eye from contemplating the face of the minister, all through the long sermon. When it closed, he walked up and stood in front of the communion-table, and looked up at the singers with a pleasant face, although it is recorded that they introduced into their tune more quavers and demi-semi-quavers than of right belonged to it.

The minister, leaning over the pulpit, said:

"John Bonyton, I command thee to go thy way."

A pleasant smile passed over the handsome face of the sagamore, and he glanced over his shoulder, upward at Mr. Jenner, and replied:

"Bid thy sheep betake themselves to the fold, ewes and lambs, Thomas Jenner, and I will await their exit."

Whereat the minister pronounced the benediction, and the people, according to their wont, went forth, the men first, and

the women following; and it was notable that every woman turned her face and looked fully at the handsome outlaw, and the cheek of every woman was observed to turn, not pale, but to glow with a rosy blush.

Lastly, the minister came slowly down the pulpit-stairs, and walked down the aisle, and then John Bonyton strode forth, and walked, in a slow and stately manner, up the main street of the village, along the river-bank, and up the mountain gorges. No man dared lay hands upon him.

The Sagamore of Saco was no ordinary man, and the men of the times felt it. Tradition is yet rife with legends of his great beauty, his tall, manly physique, like that of the handsome King of Israel, head and shoulders overtopping the rest of the people, while his lonely but unfrequent smile wore the power of fascination.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LIKING FOR MISERY.

MISTRESS BONYTON at length found repose where the weary are at rest, and Nancy gave her hand, in due time, to the godly youth, Ephraim Higgins, who, stimulated by his wife, made many ambitious attempts at public prayer and exhortation, but, being deficient in that fervor or ostentation of character essential to "freedom of utterance," our Ephraim was fain to give over these public aspirations, and content himself with the "amen," which marked his indorsement of the sayings of others. If the truth must be told, Nancy not unfrequently nudged him to hold his peace even in this, because of the said amen having fallen in the wrong quarter, to the no little mortification of his wife.

Perseverance was a rose so guarded with thorns, that no man had the courage to pluck it, and she may have sometimes caused Nancy some discomfort by alluding to persons and events which might as well have been buried in oblivion. For instance, she was fond of marking an event thus:

"This happened when your Ephraim, the great goose, was spoonying about Hope Vines. Never shall I forget, Nancy, how he used to stand with his finger in his mouth—no, his thumb in his mouth—looking after that girl."

"What do you think became of Hope?" asked Nancy Higgins, ignoring the spiteful remark of her sister.

"I believe Satan carried her off bodily. I no more believe that she was stolen by the Indians, than I believe that brother Ephe will set the world afire."

"Never you mind my Ephe; it's easy to cry sour grapes. When you get *your* man we shall see—we shall see!"

"There goes John, as true as I live, stalking along just as though the folks warn't ready to eat him up," cried Perseverance, making a rush at the door, at which she cried, loudly:

"John! John Bonyton, look here!"

The sagamore turned with a grave slowness, and confronted the speaker in silence. His sister Nancy now joined her, and beckoned him to approach. He lowered the musket which he carried carelessly in the hollow of his arm, showing it to be loaded, and casting the butt upon the ground, it gave out a sharp, significant ring.

"What is your will, wildcats?" he asked.

Unheeding this not very complimentary epithet, Mrs. Higgins entreated him to enter her house.

"Why should I enter your house?"

"Because I am your sister, John, and it shames me to see you living this heathenish life."

"Then cease to regard me as a brother. Come here, Perseverance."

In a few minutes the woman was seen moving slowly down the street in company with the tall and taciturn man, who moved toward the rude cemetery, in which were laid the dust to dust of the few of the colony who had passed from the strife of the world into the eternal rest. It was a small inclosure in which the stumps of trees were still visible, and the graves were little more than heaps of sand.

Now and then might be seen a few flowers, and a grave rounded with green turf; but it was a desolate-looking place, serving for nothing but the sad necessities of humanity.

In silence the two proceeded onward, and at length stopped

where the sod was heaped with unwonted care over a newly made grave. Perseverance burst into tears :

"She lies here, John."

The sagamore leaned upon his gun—raising the helmet of plumes from his head, and as he gazed downward, tears flowed from his eyes.

"Did she die in peace, at last?"

"Yea, my brother, she deplored your heathenish—"

He waved his hand.

"What said she?"

"At the last she was very gentle. She said she feared the people would bring down the curse of God upon themselves for some of their doings."

"Go on," he said, observing her to hesitate.

"She said, 'I am ill at ease about John,' and then she burst into tears, and cried, 'Oh! John, John, my dearest, best! Oh, that I could see him!—oh, that I could bless him, before I die!'"

At this outburst of genuine feeling from his sister, John Bonyton took her hand in his, and long after did Perseverance remember the groan that escaped his bosom.

"Said she nothing of Hope Vines?"

"Yes, John, she said she repented before God the evil she designed in her heart against her."

"And you?"

As he asked the question, his stern eyes were upon her face.

"I, John?"

"Yes; have you no repentance?"

"I did nothing."

"Is it nothing to let loose the tongue against the innocent? Do not tell me that you, Perseverance Bonyton, believed these idle stories, which you helped to promulgate."

"Wiser than I believed them."

He turned moodily away to the woods, and Perseverance went her way, momentarily softened, but only to resume her hard and vindictive thoughts, and become one in that aggregate of falsehood and malignity which goes to make up human society.

That night, when the village was buried in sleep, John Bonyton might have been seen for hours, kneeling upon his

mother's grave—he, the strong man, weeping like a child upon its mother's breast.

Not till the morning was dawning did he turn away, murmuring, "Mother, mother," as if the repetition of the word brought some ease to his heart.

As he turned away from the grave in the early light, he was surprised to see Ephraim Higgins standing beside him.

"I just come, John, to speak to you. I al'ays liked you, John."

"I am sure of it. You've a true, honest heart, Ephe."

"I'm glad you think so, John. I al'ays liked you—you know I did."

"Then you would not take my life, even to please the Governor?" This with a smile.

"No, indeed, John. I wish I could do something for you. I wish you'd come home and live like a Christian, John—I wish you would."

And poor, honest Ephraim grasped his hand warmly as he went on:

"I don't understand things much, John, and sometimes I make your sister Nancy feel ashamed of me, John; but I mean right, I do—and we've got a baby—we have, and it's e'ena'most as purty as Hope Vines."

"You don't forget Hope?"

"No, John, no; I didn't think of her as the women think I did—never, never! She was like a born angel to me—like a cherubim on a tombstone. Somehow I felt as if I could pray to her. My mother said I was bewitched, and you was bewitched, and I believed it. I know better now, John. I've thought it out."

"And you love your old playmate yet, Ephraim, and you know and hear nothing of Hope?"

"No, John, not a word. But, look here—she was doomed, like, from the fust. I used to feel as if I should cry, to look at her eyes."

"I never saw any thing strange in her—nothing but truth and goodness."

"All that, John, but not the kind to wring out a dishcloth or sweep a kitchen. Women don't like them that don't do jest as all the rest of them duz."

"That is true. What then?"

"Don't you remember that Hope would whistle up a quail, with that purty cherry mouth of hern? Well, the women used to look askance at this, and say—I've heard Nancy say it a hundred times—"

"Say what?" asked the sagamore, for Ephraim had a dim perception of saying something not just what should be said and had stopped.

"Well, they used to say,

' Whistling gals and crowing hens
Always come to bad ends.'

If women don't keep the right side of each other, it's a gone case with 'em, John."

"You think they would have tortured and killed Hope out of spite, and called it religion?"

"I don't pretend to be as wise as your sister Nancy, John—la, bless you! I believe the baby's wiser'n its own father; but I do say they'd a killed her, and it's better as it is."

"Who would have had the heart to do it?"

"As to that, any of them. My wife Nancy would a helped, she would. You ought to hear her quote Scriptur' about witches and wizards, and necromancers, and Moloch, and familiar sperrits. I've sot and heard her till every hair in my head stood on end. I think the women are kind of disappointed not to a had a chance at her."

John Bonyton ground his teeth with fury, and exclaimed:

"They will find a subject in due time, I'll be bound."

"That they will. The way they tell about running pins and needles into the flesh of some poor old thing is awful. I think the women, not going to war, let their minds run on these kind of torments instead. Now, Nancy is as kind as the best, but I've heard her tell how they'd do. They were in doubt whether they would burn or hang Hope."

John Bonyton shuddered, and ejaculated between his teeth a compound which we will not repeat; but it was "she"—something, and a term which many a woman has well deserved.

Ephraim looked aghast at the fierce passion of his friend and droned on again:

"You was al'ays violent and kind o' unreasonable, John. But it's nothing here nor there to talk. Howsomever you

can fix it, women ain't over'n above tender. They kinder enjoy sufferin'. See 'em cry. They *enjoy* it. I'm more tender to our baby than Nancy is."

It is doubtful if the sagamore heard half of this philosophical tirade of the kind-hearted Ephraim. The sun was now up, and admonished him that if he would escape observation at such a time and place, he must take his departure. Seeing this, Ephraim broke in again:

"Come home with me, John, and eat breakfast—bread and ham and potatoes, John, Christian food, with a grace before meat."

"I have renounced the colony, as you well know, Ephraim. I can not go with you; but I thank you none the less."

"Come, now, don't turn your back upon me, John Bonyton. It goes to my heart to see you go away from kith and kin, and everybody's hand agin' you."

But, before he had ceased to speak, the sagamore grasped his hand, and even, in an unwonted fit of softness, clasped his arms around his one simple, devoted friend, and without a word, was gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CRYSTAL STONE.

YEARS, as we have said, had passed away since the disappearance of Hope Vins, and her memory was lost to all but the Sagamore of Saco, in whose breast it burned a perpetual and yearning reminiscence, branded into the very fiber of his life and being.

A council of the Sacos had been called among the upper waters of the river, for the tribe had determined upon a grand expedition against the Terrentines and Androscoggins.

The moon was at full, and the sky balmy with the aromas of wood and water, for the brief Indian summer had renewed the youth and revived the beauty of the waning season. The young braves had brought to the council a captive, taken in a recent attack upon a Terrentine village, and she now was

before them bound to a tree, the light of the moon conflicting with the ruddy light of the torch-flame of the council-fire, playing in weird contrast over her dark, motionless features.

As chief after chief arose and gave, in a clear, solemn voice, his views regarding the campaign, it was observed that the sagamore cast stern and frequent glances upon the captive. At length he seized a torch and flashed it full upon her face. The eyes of the two met, but not a word passed the lips of either. Returning to the council, the sagamore asked:

"Has the captive heard our proceedings?"

"No; the wind bears the sound away. The sapling to which she is bound is beyond earshot."

"It is Acashee, the daughter of Samoset."

The younger chiefs sprung to their feet, and would have buried their tomahawks in her brain, for they knew of the story of Hope Vines, and the grief of the sagamore.

The captive witnessed the outburst with exultant pride, and began to chant her death-song, with head erect and eyes flashing skyward, in words like the following:

"Break out into laughter,
Ye thunder-bolts loud,
Wildly thereafter
Scream from your storm-cloud,
Oh, eagles undaunted!

"By the warrior's hand
The maiden shall fall.
Light up the torch brand!
The torturers call
With pangs they have vaunted."

Thus far, and the women from the camp, unwilling that one of their kind and a captive should emulate the hardihood of warriors, rushed out and threw water from their gourds upon her, and in derision tossed bean-pods and corn-husks about her, and jeeringly clapped the paddles of the canoe, and the pokers of the fire in her face. For awhile the proud woman held her head high, but, fearful of falling beneath these feminine weapons, her head fell upon her bosom, and she was silent.

In the mean while, the chiefs around the council-fire sat long in solemn conclave. At one time, the debate had been of more than usual animation, but at length a solemn silence

prevailed, and the sagamore approached the captive, tomahawk in hand. She lifted her head proudly and looked him in the face, while he cut the bonds and set her free.

"Go, Acashee; go, Spider; we need you not."

The woman looked imploringly up, and even dashed her hands into his face, as he held her by the hair of her head, and cut away the long, heavy braids that depended therefrom. A shout of derision burst from the women, and they followed her with loud and contemptuous jeers far into the forest. Weary at length of their malignant sport, they returned to the camp, leaving the disgraced woman to make her way as best she could, through almost impenetrable forests, to her own people.

John Bonyton, having cut away the black locks of Acashee, retired from the council. A scout had been appointed to follow the woman, never to lose sight of her, to succor her if needed, and after having seen her safely within her own tribe, to return to the camp, and report all he could learn.

When Acashee had departed, John Bonyton, impelled by an irresistible desire to learn something of Hope Vines, whose fate he believed was known to the Indian girl, followed in her path till he saw her throw herself upon the fallen leaves, and give utterance to a fierce, low cry, not unlike that of the hungry panther. She tore at her dishonored locks, and gnashed her teeth in impotent fury.

The sagamore, tall, calm and silent, stood before her. Instantly she sprung to her feet, and throwing back her head, cried:

"Pale-faced coward! I spit upon you, and will work a spell that shall consume all your bones, and—"

"Silence, girl. You will not provoke me to kill you. Live, the scorn of your people."

"I will live, but only to work your destruction! No, no, no, John Bonyton," and she covered her face with her hands, to hide her relenting tears.

The sagamore was softened, and laid his hand upon her shoulder.

"Tell me what became of Hope Vines, Acashee, and I will forget all the past."

"She was called away by the Great Spirit." And her look and tone softened.

"Acashee, I know your falsehood and your thousand wiles. You do not speak truth. Tell me, I beseech you, where you have put her, for I feel in my very soul that she lives. She comes to me in my dreams, she walks by my side in the forest-path—there is no spot to me where Hope is not."

"Hear me, John Bonyton: if I knew, I would not tell. Hear me! She is dead—dead, a thousand times dead to you, and I rejoice to know it. The daughters of the morning star have taken her to their arms; why then should you scorn Acashee?"

Her dark eyes were fixed tenderly upon his face as she spoke,

while her rich, clear voice wooed the echoes to melody. She had laid her wrist upon his arm in her old seductive way, but the sagamore shook her off, and turned his eyes from her face, as he replied :

"Go, then, Acashee, go. I had hoped there might be some touch of goodness in that cruel heart. Go."

"Touch of goodness! proud sagamore! Is it nothing to spurn my kind only for such as you? Nothing to live one long thought of you?"

While she spoke, a wood-pigeon alighted upon a branch near by, and with singular dexterity she caught it, and held it fondly to her bosom, smoothing and caressing its ruffled plumage.

John Bonyton waved his hand and turned away, while the treacherous girl stood watching his tall, receding form, till the trees concealed it; then, dashing the bird to the ground, she placed her foot upon its beautiful breast, exclaiming :

"This, and this, be the fate of Hope Vines!" and she ground its innocent blood into the moss-grown soil.

The sagamore plunged into the recesses of the forest, and at length emerged upon the river-bank, where, as boy and youth, he had idled his days in that ecstatic dream of love and youth, which so fills up the soul that the past is forgotten, the future hung with rainbow clouds, pavilioned with golden vaults and silvery sheen, thus exalting the glow of the present by an onward gorgeous perspective.

"Lost! lost! all is lost!" he exclaimed.

Unconsciously he had cast himself down by the wigwam of the prophet of the tribe. It was the custom of the Indians to build the tent or wigwam of those whose duty it was to watch all omens bearing upon the welfare of the people, in some secluded spot within the sound of great falls, or in proximity to some natural cave or grotto, where they might, undisturbed, exercise their spells and incantations. A hand, cold, and wasted by fastings nearly to the bone, was laid upon the shoulder of the sagamore.

"Listen, my son! Turn thy steps to the east. Go!"

Before the sagamore could reply, he was gone. He entered the wigwam; it was empty. He searched upon every side; no one was visible; and he began to doubt if his senses might not have deceived him, when he observed a clear crystal glittering in the moonlight. It was one of those peculiar stones which the common people believed came from the top of the vast White Mountains lying a hundred miles to the north, and hence popularly called the "White Mountain Carbuncle."

He knew this was a part of the paraphernalia of the wizard's wigwam, and that on momentous occasions the chiefs called upon their oracle to look into this crystal stone and announce the augury. Remembering this, he raised it to his eyes, looked and started back with surprise. What did he behold?

One look more! There, throned in the center of the crystal, was a miniature image of Hope!

He fell headlong to the earth, he knew not how or why; a feeling of exultation—a something by which he felt as if all sense of weight, of obstacle had been removed. It was but a moment, and the same cold, bony hand wrenched the crystal from his grasp, and was no more seen.

The impression, whatever it might be, remained, and without trying to account for what he had seen, a new and abiding conviction that he should once more behold the dear object of his lifelong thoughts took possession of his soul. He returned to the camp, buoyed up by brighter thoughts than he had experienced for long and dreary years.

It is well known that the images to be read in the "crystal stone" was a popular belief with the Indians, though only a few persons were gifted with power of sight. They believed the magician must be originally endowed with the power of prescience, and he must educate and develop this power by a long course of fasting and incantation. They believed, also, that a person upon whom had fallen any great calamity became spontaneously endowed with this gift.

The mad-dog stone is a different species, used medicinally for the cure of hydrophobia, and the bite of venomous serpents. This latter is of oriental origin.

The sagamore would gladly have left all, and followed the oracle of the wizard, traveling toward the rising sun, where he now felt sure he should find Hope; but, as chief of the tribe he could not cast off the duties it involved, or forget the grave decorums of the office. He must await the return of the scout, and then follow the Terrentines and Androscoggins to their villages or hunting-grounds. Accordingly, he made ready for the eastern campaign.

CHAPTER XV.

ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS.

IN the mean time Acashee went her solitary way alone, lashed by the furies of shame and revenge. So fierce burned the wild passions of her breast, she was unconscious of hunger or fatigue. She ground her teeth, and planted her foot as if she could crush those who were far from her, but whom her rage presented as visible objects. A serpent crossed her path, and she seized it with her hand by the tail, as she had seen the young boys of her people do, and with one fell slat-dash, severed the head from its body.

She forded the Saco river, not yet swollen by autumnal rains, and as the morning dawned, she crawled under the shadow of an intervening rock, and fell into a profound sleep.

Rising at length, she wandered hour after hour along the upland, commanding a view of the distant village, the vessels shaking out their white sails to the breeze, and the fishermen drawing their nets to land. The smoke of the little hamlet rose dreamily upon the air, and the light tinkle of the herd-bell mingled with the lowing of kine and the faint echo of the ax of the woodman.

Often had Hope Vines paddled her light canoe across the Saco to meet her upon this upland, and here, with John Bonyton, they had idled away the long summer days, unconscious of that dreamy future which had now made life a desert to them all.

Tearing herself from these maddening thoughts, she stooped down and saw her ghastly face and discrowned head; she bathed her hands and burning cheeks in the stream, sitting under a shelf of rock, lest she should be seen by any of those who knew her in her days of power and her days of beauty!

She unlaced the worn moccasins and plunged her swollen feet into the cooling wave. She sat long and gloomily surveying her altered looks. Her limbs were swollen and discolored by the action of the thongs which had bound her, and her feet blistered by travel. All day she sat moody and silent, her brow contracted, but it was evident that physical pain had nothing to do with the fierce and angry passions that swayed her.

Acashee may have been perhaps between forty and fifty years of age, but, having been exempt from the ordinary labor of women in the savage state, she presented few of those hard and angular lines common to her sex. She was taller than the wont of Indian women, more slender than is customary with them at her period of life, and altogether, she presented a litheness and springiness of fiber that reminded one of Arab more than aboriginal blood. Her brow was high, retreating and narrow, with arched and sharply-contracted brows, beneath which burned her intense and restless eyes.

At length she lifted her masses of short hair, black as night, despite of time, and gnashed her teeth violently in view of the indignity to which she had been subjected. She raised herself proudly, and cried, in a passionate voice, and with a wild, bitter laugh:

"John Bonyton, I have my revenge; a thousand times I have it. In spite of you, I *will* sit again with chiefs and honored women; and shorn of my locks even, no tongue will wag itself against me. I am above and beyond your malice!"

We should say that, among the Indians, for a woman to have her hair cut off, is to cast suspicion upon her chastity. It is the

only revenge permitted the husband for a suspicion of dishonor, but in the end, it is a sure and fatal revenge, as the woman is at once cast out of the tribe, and no one will grant her aid or succor of any kind.

Acashee pressed her burning hands again and again over her degraded head, and once more took up her march toward the rising sun. Day by day she traveled onward, now fording rivers, and now surmounting mountain heights. Bays and inlets were doubled, and often some formidable river crossed on a frail raft, or traced upward toward its source, till her feet were able to wade it.

With the quick resource of savage life, she had been able to supply her own wants by means of the bow and arrow, the rude net, and the expert trap constructed by her own hands. She found corn and beans in the deserted summer haunts of the Indians, and the woods afforded her plenty of wild fruits. Still, she grew thin and haggard, from toil, exposure and travel; but her resolute spirit never quailed—never felt even the tortures which lacerated the body. Sometimes, she rested for whole days, and then, with renewed vigor, pursued her solitary way.

Rarely did she venture to kindle a fire, lest it might betray her to some migrating tribe, or some wild beast might be attracted by the flame. Sometimes her quick ear detected the approach of an Indian runner, carrying intelligence to a far distant tribe. Sometimes she saw a group of hunters, who encamped together for the pursuit of the chase; then she would be compelled to make a detour to avoid them, or to lie by till they disappeared—for sooner would she lay down her life than encounter a red-man in her present dishonored plight. Her only hope was to reach her own people, and there explain all.

It was now October, but the season had proved one of exceeding mildness, and the birds, which usually desert these northern regions a month earlier, remained in their summer haunts from some sure instinct, to enliven the wilderness, and cheer its rude inhabitants.

Acashee now reached the Androscoggin river, which, encumbered by rapids and picturesque falls, can never be subject to ship or steamer, but which, in our day, has long since been subdued to the purposes of the millwright, and added the clatter of loom and spindle to the grand cathedral hymn which alone, in the time of our story, awoke the echoes of the everlasting hills to the roar of its descending waters over shelving rocks a hundred feet from its level.

Here the woman saw the fires of her people in the distance, and found a canoe with which she crossed to the opposite side of the river. The sun was down when she reached the village, and the usual routine was being observed preparatory to night and sleep.

The chiefs lounged upon the ground, or pointed to the trophies of the chase, which the women conveyed to the wigwam. Children gathered up their bows and arrows and threw themselves upon the skins, in all the abandon of dirty robes and muddy moccasins. Here and there might be seen a half-grown boy, grumbling audibly as he paced back and forth in front of the wigwam, carrying a stout baby "pack-a-back," while the overworked mother prepared venison and parched corn for the evening meal of her lord and master.

Torches began to flare here and there, and the whole female population were busy with household labor, when Acashee, thin, worn, foot-sore, and burning with wrath, appeared before them. There was one burst of contempt and scoffing from the women, which Acashee cut short with an angry gesture, and with an imperious wave of her hand, appealed to the chiefs.

A conference ensued, long and secret, which will be unfolded in the sequel. The honorable women of the tribe were instructed to minister to the wants of the wanderer, and honors, such as even the haughty daughter of Samoset had never before received, were lavished upon her.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE UNSEEN EYE.

IN all this long journey Acashee had not been alone. Sometimes she had found food in her pathway, which she supposed had been dropped by some family of careless husbandry, but which had been purposely left by the secret emissary of the Sacos, who never lost sight of her in all her journeying. When she slept, often and often a keen eye watched her slumbers, and scared away the deadly reptile or hungry beast watching for its prey, and hushed the bark of the fox or the howl of the wolf through the night-watches.

Even the keen ear of the savage woman failed to detect this stealthy follower ever in her track. She had turned aside carefully from all Indian villages, conscious that her dishonored locks would expose her to insult and danger, except to those acquainted with her cruel and haughty spirit, and who would appreciate the story of her captivity and final escape. Reverent as well as watchful of his charge, the scout was faithful to the letter of his embassy, and not only preserved her from danger, but, with a wise forecast, provided as best he could for her comfort.

On one occasion he even carried his protection beyond ordi-

nary limits, for seeing her reel and sink to the earth from exhaustion, and fearing she might not reach her destination, he snared a rabbit in her pathway, and left cooked beans and corn slightly concealed under pine boughs, as if stored for the use of a hunter or trapper. These he saturated with the juice of a well-known narcotic, sure that a long and refreshing slumber would ensue.

Nor was he disappointed. Acashee eagerly availed herself of the hidden viands, and slept long and well, to go onward when she awoke with renewed vigor.

Arrived at the Androscoggin village, the duty of the scout was incomplete till he should learn the destination of the war-party evidently making preparations for a march.

As the chiefs of the Androscoggins sat around the council-fire that night, and listened to the story of the woman—the silence undisturbed save by the heavy roar of the falls, now pouring in one continuous thunder-roar, and now suspended as by a lack of the freightage of water—a pause like a human breath—and then bursting into its never-ending diapason of sublime melody—there might have been seen, prone upon the ground, a lithe, slender form, and a keen ear, that lost not a word of all their plans, and a pair of bright eyes exulting in the knowledge he had gained of all the movements designed.

When Acashee left the council, she did not retire to the wigwams that were offered her, but waving her hand, forbidding the women to follow, she descended the banks of the river to the foot of the falls, known to the Indians by the name of Pejipscoot, and in our day as Lewiston Falls.

We must pause briefly and describe this most beautiful region—beautiful in our day even, notwithstanding the majestic falls have been subjected to the uses of the mill and factory. The river Androscoggin is a wild, coquettish nymph, now moving in stately grace amid embowering trees, and now bending into abrupt and startling curves, and anon plunging over headland rocks in one vast sheet, to sport again amid soft savannas and placid bays, once the mooring-place of Indian canoes when the tribes were bent upon some deadly enterprise.

In our day these warm and fertile slopes give place to cultivated farms, from whence arise the rural sounds of flock and herd so grateful to the spirit, and that primitive blast of horn, winding itself into a thousand echoes, the signal for the ingathering of a household.

Cliffs, crowned with fir, overhung the waters; hills rising hundreds of feet cast their dense shadows quite across the stream; and even in our day, the slim canoe of the Indian may be seen poised below, while some stern relict of the tribes sits motionless therein, and gazes upward to the ancient sites of his people, and recalls the day when, above the Falls of Pejipscoot, a populous village sent up its council-smoke day and night,

telling of peace and the uncontested power and sway of his tribe.

But, in the time of our story, the region stood in its untamed majesty; the whirling mass of waters thundering to the level below in the midst of an unbroken and boundless forest; and the great roar of the cataract booming through the solitude like the unceasing voice of the eternal deep.

Stealthily the Indian scout followed the woman to the base of the cataract. He saw her stoop her head to the overhanging waters, and she was gone. In vain he searched. The waters, at the point of her disappearance, threw themselves forward in a semicircular curve, whence arose masses of vapor, upon which the moonbeams playing created a silvery bow, more lovely even than the gorgeously-hued rainbow of the sun.

He rubbed his eyes, he threw himself prostrate upon the ground to detect any shelf of the overhanging rocks behind which she might have hidden herself. An owl started from a hollow tree overhead, and with silent wing floated into the deep forest. An old withered crone tottered down the bank, and, seating herself below where he lay, began to gather vervain and hellebore, for the moon was at its wane, and she was preparing some witch-broth to be used in incantation.

Slowly peering about, she turned over the damp stones, and caught slugs, and snails also, and then a toad was dragged forth, and she disappeared.

In vain the scout examined every nook and every spot in search of the vanished form. Not a trace remained. He looked above and below the fall; all was silent—no vestige of a human being, except in a canoe drawn up under the bank amid a clump of bushes. He stooped down to launch it, in order to cross the river, when his arms were strongly grasped by an Indian, whose garments were dripping with water.

He was old and white-headed, but a perfect Hercules in frame, and handled the young scout as if he had been a mere child in his hands. The contest was quick and decisive, for the old man raised the youth in his arms and dashed him upon the ground, where he lay stunned and bleeding, but with sufficient consciousness left to know his antagonist had launched the canoe, and was paddling across the river. Rousing himself, terrified and sorely perplexed, he turned his face westward, and sought once more the people of his tribe, ill at ease, feeling that the full object of his mission had not been accomplished. But, as the first duty of a soldier is to obey, so the first duty of a savage is to tell unflinchingly the truth, and he returned to tell all just as it had transpired.

CHAPTER XVII.

A REMINISCENCE.

WE need not follow our nimble scout on his homeward way, a journey performed with far greater celerity than when he followed the footsteps of Acashee. Green meadows and mountain heights were left behind him, and with foot swift as that of the wild stag, and knowing as little of fatigue, he in due time reached the Casco Bay. Here he found a canoe secreted or deserted, which he took without scruple and launched fearlessly across the water, the long strokes of the paddle showing him fresh as the day on which he started upon his adventures.

No sooner was it known that he had returned, than the council-fire was lighted, the pipe passed round in token of good, for the calumet was as indicative of loyalty and secrecy in the eye of the savage, as was the rose to the classical world.

The young scout told his story in a few brief, frank words, to which the sagamore listened in silence. He had been confident of learning something of the fate of Hope Vines, through this return of Acashee to her people, and now he seemed doomed to disappointment. He had, in spite of himself, dwelt upon the words of the wizard, "Go to the east," and he felt that there he should learn of the fate of Hope Vines. When the scout at length told of the mysterious disappearance of the woman at the foot of the falls, and the no less mysterious appearance of the old man, his interest revived. He waited the conclusion of the recital, and looked around for the comments of the older chiefs.

All eyes were fixed upon War-ra-was-ky—a chief who had numbered nearly a hundred years, and who was scarred by many a hard-contested battle, renowned also for his great wisdom. Rising slowly to his feet, and resting heavily upon his war-club, the old Nestor thus spoke.

"The words of the young brave awaken a memory that has long slept in the caves of the past. Listen, my brothers!

"The Great Spirit, mindful of his children, has filled their hunting-grounds with secret places, where they may hide themselves when the black cloud descends, and the air is ringing with hurtling clubs and lightning arrow-heads.

"Listen! In my youth, ere the moss of a century had converted the sapling into a gnarled and withered tree, our tribes held power over the Androscoggins. We demanded tribute of them, which they refused to pay. We burned their wigwams, slew their braves in battle, and chased them from their old

hunting-grounds. At length they made alliance with the Kennebecs and Penobscots, and we in turn showed the sole of the foot in place of the white of the eye."

The war-club of the warrior smote the ground, and his arm shook with rage as he recalled this hour of defeat.

"Listen! We rallied again; we burned the village of the Androscoggins, at the top of the Pejipskot, where the great waters pour themselves in one continuous flood, as the young brave has described. The women sprung with their children into the boiling waters beneath. The warriors, few in number, stood on the rocks below.

"Listen! One by one the warriors were gone. We shot our arrows into their midst, but the rocks above impeded their flight, and there stood the band beneath in one solid mass, and yet their numbers became less, till all were gone but a youth, who had all the while stood in front amidst the spray.

"Listen! He stood there and sung the song of the warrior; he spread his arms, as if he embraced the waters, and we saw his body dashed from rock to rock, till it was lost in the gulf below."

A murmur ran through the assemblage; the old man bowed his head in homage of the dauntless dead, and went on:

"Listen! I waited suns and moons around Pejipskot; my eyes never lost sight of the spot at which the warriors disappeared. At length, one morning, just as the sun tipped the tops of the ancient pines with fire, I saw a warrior issue from the spray. He cast an eager glance to the sky, and earth, and water, and before I could save him, he too plunged himself adown the cataract.

"Listen! A Saco chief is tireless. I waited and watched till, one by one, the Androscoggins, thin and powerless, showed themselves amid the spray, and were lost in the flood below."

The Sagamore of Saco arose to his feet, as the old chief ceased to speak.

"There is a chamber under the falls, my father, is there not?"

"Thou hast well divined, my son! And there the squawmen who fear the war-club and the arrow, hide their wolfish bones."

"The Androscoggins have joined the Terrentines and Kennebecs, and will descend upon the Sacos with all their power. Let us not wait their coming. Ere the moon is full, we will spring upon their path like the panther upon his prey."

The younger chiefs rose to their feet, and responded by twanging their bow-strings in token of defiance.

"We will avenge the blood of our warriors; we will reassert our power over the Androscoggins."

Such were the words of the young braves.

It was decided, as at one voice, to anticipate the warlike

designs of the eastern tribes, and carry the war, as of old, to the ancient battlefields of the Androscoggins. The scout was in possession of all their plans; they would feast their warriors upon the banks of the Saco, and winter at the Pool, where Indian and white man were alike to fall in one exterminating blow.

The more cautious chiefs proposed calling upon the colonists to aid in the expedition, but this was overruled by the sagamore, who declared the red-man able to carry on his own wars, and strike without aid for their old council-fires, their altars and their homes.

This audacity pleased the majority, which determined that the expedition should start upon the third day. They would descend the Saco—cross Casco Bay to the Kennebec, which river they would ascend till it receives the Androscoggin, and thence up the latter river till the Falls of the Pejipscoot (Lewiston) should be reached—thus performing the entire route by water.

It was determined that two hundred picked warriors, headed by the sagamore, would be sufficient to effect the surprise and discomfiture of the eastern alliance, which had proposed to wait till the hunting season was finished before they started upon their warlike expedition. But the Sacos boasted that the grass never grew in the trail of their warriors, and now, headed by their brave and untiring sagamore, they were confident of success.

But, before the tribe started upon this perilous enterprise, according to their wont they consulted the prophet of the Sacos, to learn the tokens of the invisible powers, for an Indian, no more than an ancient Roman, would not impiously expose the public interests of the tribe without first learning if the gods approved.

Accordingly, the chief men resorted to his wigwam; they laid the choicest venison, fish and corn at his threshold; then they lighted a fire upon a rock near by, and having laid beside it an arrow pointing eastward, and a canoe with the paddles pointing in the same direction, they seated themselves in silence upon the ground.

It was not long before the wizard appeared, with signs of exultation. Seizing the arrow, he hurled it into the air, and seemed to urge the canoe onward; he shouted in a high key words like the following:

“High on his rock the bold eagle is screaming,
Safe in his wigwam the warrior is dreaming.
There’s a cry from the hill-top—a cry from the plain,
A shriek from the dauntless that come never again.
Up, up to the battle, but never a blow!
Up, up to the battle, but never a foe!”

The chiefs exchanged looks of doubt and surprise. The more cautious would have forced him again before them, but the

sagamore declared the omens were for good, and directed to start upon their way. At once the two hundred were to be seen threading their way to the river-side, where the canoes were manned. Here we must leave them, now hugging the shore to avoid observation, and now boldly breasting the waters of the stormy sea. Headlands were crossed, not doubled, the warriors shouldering the canoes at "carrying-places," which greatly abridged the distance, the hazards, and the labors of the way.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SNAKE VS. SPIDER.

ACASHEE, astute, cautious, and devoid of all personal fear, was not without a certain natural power over her tribe, which regarded her with some degree of religious awe, inferior in extent but not unakin to that which lent a halo to the brow of the unfortunate Hope Vines.

Acashee was skillful in all the incantations, dances, and magic of her people, and did not scruple to work upon their terrors, or to turn all their faith in her to her own account.

The chamber under the great falls was kept a secret from the people at large, being used mostly for religious purposes, or in periods of great extremity as a last rallying point of the chiefs of the tribe; hence, comparatively few were acquainted with the place of retreat of Acashee, when she retired from the council, and waved back the women who would have importuned her with surmises.

Having plunged under the jutting water, she arose in a gorgeous room, hung with pendants of crystal, and furnished with sacred altars, fashioned in the long ages by that instinct of nature which leads her to indicate in solitary grottos and overhanging woods that intuitive need of worship which is the characteristic of our humanity, even in its rudest shape.

Prominent in the center of this vast chamber was the stone of sacrifice, and a caldron, which told plainly its use to immolate human beings, for stains of blood flecked here and there the whiteness of the surrounding stones.

Acashee paused in front of this ghastly object, and seemed to feast her eyes in contemplation of that which so well harmonized with her own cruel and vindictive feelings. Intent upon her long work of vengeance, devoid of all those gentler emotions which lend a grace to the sex, while at the same time they present a barrier to great achievement, she stood with a half-smile upon her lips, as if already she beheld the object of her wrath.

impaled upon the bloody altar, and sent shrieking to the throne of the appeased deities. At length she turned away, and paced slowly up and down the dim area, which gave out no echo to her restless feet.

Here had for ages been performed those religious rites, so secretly hidden, that to this day we are left in doubt whether or not the northern Indians offered human beings upon the altar of sacrifice. Here were deposited the skulls of great chiefs who had perished in battle, or been tortured by their enemies, and had died as became brave men.

Skins of serpents and reptiles dried in the sun, bones and ivory, vases of terra-cotta, thorns steeped in blood, polished stones and crystals of vast size, were arranged in a niche beneath a stupendous arch; and here, couched in crystal, extending fold beyond fold, dry from the dust of centuries, but vivid with the hues of life, was one of those gigantic lizards, (*sauræ*), which might have crept in here before the deluge, and here slept undisturbed, an object of superstitious awe to these devotees of nature.

The grotto of the Pejipscoot was not so broad at the entrance as might have been anticipated, but it extended back to a vast distance, widening laterally till it became a gorgeous labyrinth, rising arch beyond arch, spreading itself into interminable vistas, and assuming unexpected shapes of resplendent grace and beauty—columns from which hung the most delicate tracery; pendants reflecting every prismatic hue; vails of network, as if the fairy fingers of the frost had been arrested in their play, and their work rendered eternal in the adamant stone: as if a thousand gnomes of the mine had here collected their treasury, and here wrought a thousand fantastic shapes into forms of beauty.

It was midday, and the sun, penetrating the sheet of the falls, cast a not uncheerful light into the cave, the size and gloom of which were still further relieved by a fire burning in the center, and one or more torches stuck in the fissures of the rocks. With her back to the fire stood Acashee, gazing intently upon the white, liquid, and tumultuous mass which constituted the door or curtain to this strange habitation. A fierce, cold expression rested upon her face, and the last few weeks of toil and suffering had done the work of years in planting furrows upon her brow.

At one side of the cave, stretched upon skins of a delicate texture, as if prepared to do great honor to whomsoever should apply them to use, appeared what might have been mistaken for a white veil, excepting that a draft of air caused a portion of it to rise and fall, spreading the filaments, and showing it to be a mass of human hair.

So still was the recumbent figure, so motionless the tiny, moccasined foot just perceptible, and so ghostly the hue and

abundance of the covering, that all suggested an image of death—a draping for the tomb.

Acashee turned sharply around and surveyed the figure long and silently, a malignant smile growing upon her features. At length she asked:

“How much longer will you sleep, skake (snake)? Get up, I tell thee!”

At this ungracious speech the figure slightly started but did not obey. Acashee laughed bitterly.

“You do not like skake (snake); you will be called Wa-ain (white soul), and be a great medicine-woman; but you are no more than a skake at the best. Get up, I say; the warriors are coming!”

Still there was neither movement nor reply, and the woman continued, in a sharper tone:

“Hope Vines, I bid thee come and eat!”

The figure slowly lifted itself up, and looked wistfully, and yet half defiantly, at the speaker.

“Acashee, I will answer only to my own name.”

“As you like. Skake is as good as Acashee. But the spider snares even the snake.”

To this truism Hope replied only by a low moan, and settled herself upon her elbow, amid the masses of luxurious skins woven with wampum, and fringed with purple and pearl-white shells.

To a stranger, Hope might have seemed but a mere child, and yet the mouth showed that a woman's thoughts and passions had been there, and the eye was a well of deep, fathomless emotions, while the grasp of the little hand showed that no child's fiber restricted its power. The arched foot bespoke the elasticity of the tiger, while the small waist and womanly bust told of a thousand latent charms of character which time had failed to destroy.

Rising from her recumbent posture, she approached the water at the entrance to the cave, till the spray dashed itself upon her long, white locks, and the stronger light falling upon her brow, revealed the sharp, beautiful outline of her face, scarcely touched by the lapse of time, and those weird, foreshadowing, Raleigh eyes, kindling in intensity, blue in the light, and nearly black when burning with emotion.

“Water! still water! forever and forever lapsing away, and stealing my soul away—away!”

There was a mournful pathos in the tone, as if the speaker might indeed dissolve into the element upon which she gazed. A moment more and she turned to Acashee in a way which showed our little Hope of years ago was by no means broken in spirit, for she asked, sharply:

“Where have you been, Spider?—and now that I look at you, I see that your people have set a seal upon you.”

Acashee grasped the hair of Hope fiercely, and her form towered and dilated with rage, but Hope was immovable, and with a derisive smile, said :

"You dare not do it, Spider—you *dare* not."

"What should hinder that I should hurl you into the abyss below?" she cried.

"We would only go together, as you well know."

Acashee unconsciously dropped her hold of Hope, and passed her hand over her own head, which the former observing, asked, lightly :

"Who did it? and why?"

The woman now seized her by the arm, and bending down, hissed through her clenched teeth :

"John Bonyton did it."

Hope Vines dropped to the floor as if a shot had penetrated her heart, and there she lay with no sign of life, to the evident gratification of the other, who left her to recover as best she might, while she busied herself in preparing a meal over the coals. Seeing Hope rise to her feet, and stand erect and motionless at the mouth of the cave, she called out :

"Skake, come and eat."

Receiving no answer, and perhaps weary of this useless teasing, she strode across the space, and shaking her by the arm, cried again :

"Come and eat."

"I will eat," answered Hope, softly, taking corn and dried venison. There was a strange light in her eye which the woman saw, but did not understand, for she went on in her former vein :

"The Spider caught a bad snake when she wove a net for Hope Vines."

The latter covered her face with both her hands, and the veins of her forehead swelled above them. Yet when she uncovered her eyes they were red, not with tears, but with the effort to suppress them.

"It is a long, long time that I have been here, Acashee," she murmured, softly.

"Have you never passed the curtain of water since Samoset brought you here?" asked the net-weaver; and she fixed her eyes searchingly upon the face of the other, who neither quailed nor changed color beneath her gaze, but answered in the same sorrowful accent :

"How should little Hope penetrate the veil of water? Who is left to her now?"

"You remember that I once told you, '*You had a friend; you have a foe.*' The white boy and girl shouldn't have scorned the red girl. Acashee is glad down to the bottom of her soul. John Bonyton is more wretched than I am."

Hope's eyes dilated and her breast heaved.

"Tell me where you saw John Bonyton, Acashee?"

"Oh, he wears the eagle tuft bravely, and they call him Sagamore of Saco now." And she laughed in scorn.

"Oh, the long, weary years!" murmured Hope.

"Where is O-ye-ah?" asked the other.

"She died a moon ago."

"Did she make you a great medicine-woman?"

Hope rose to her feet with dignity, her brow contracted, and her eyes gleaming with unearthly radiance. She pointed upward and said:

"The Great Spirit alone knows the morrow as to-day. He reveals himself to me. Acashee, listen! I behold you pierced through and through with arrows; I see you bleed at every pore."

The proud woman was awed at her tone, and felt that Hope had the mastery.

"Who shoots the arrows?" she at length asked.

"John Bonyton, and the warriors."

The woman's head fell upon her breast, but a smile, fair as the smiles of the daughter of Samoset in her days of youth and beauty, stole to her lips as she whispered:

"It contents me so to die."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PRIESTESS.

THE priests of the Androscoggins appeared one by one within this vast temple or grotto which we have described, followed by the ancient chiefs of the tribe, each bearing a symbol indicative of his rank or office. It was observed that the Grand High Priest entered and threw himself before the stone of sacrifice in silence. His robe was gathered closely to his person, but what was most ominous of all, he had covered his face with the wings of the bat, which totally concealed his features.

All eyes followed his movements, and all ranged themselves in a circle beneath the overhanging arch; low moans escaped from his breast; he writhed upon the ground, and spread forth his hand as if for succor. At length these words burst from his lips, in a low wail like one who is compelled to speak, when he would choose to be silent:

"Where are the leaves of the late summer tree?"

Gone—down-trampled forever, and lost.

Where is the mist that rose from the sea?

Turned into stone by the lips of the frost.

"Where are the braves that march to the fight?
Hark! 'tis the shrieking of maidens I hear!
The warriors are gone—they vanish from sight.
Where is the battle-cry sweet to the ear?"

At these words, each priest and chief bent the head, and covered his face with his robe.

"The augury may be averted. Arise, thou cowardly priest, and prepare the sacrifice," cried Acashee.

They sprung to their feet and gazed upon the bold speaker, and she a woman. They accepted the omen, and gathered about the altar.

Acashee had bound a white tunic over her shoulders; she had crowned her head with the leaves of the sacred mistletoe, sacred to the Indian as well as to the Druid, because it is a parasite, and lives on the blood of another, scorning the coarse, damp ground. She stood with outstretched arms, and pointed to Hope Vines.

"Take her and appease the spirit, and save our braves!"

But Acashee had not foreseen the awe with which the pale child inspired those children of the woods. Eager to crush her rival—eager to immolate her upon the altar of her revenge, she had hoped to see them rush forward and hurl her upon the stone of sacrifice, bleeding and quivering in death, and thus her triumph had been complete.

Hope stood calm and silent, her small hands crossed and spread upon her breast, her eyes raised upward, an image of saintly grace and purity.

Some thought of ecstasy, some wild dream of beauty, some vision of supernal realms, may have descended upon the soul of the lonely child, separated from kindred, and for years, as we have intimated, consigned to this solitary grotto. Her person robed in skins of the softest and whitest texture, her hair grown so as to nearly reach her feet, her skin of the purest white, with dark eyebrows and long black eyelashes, gave a depth and splendor to her eyes, dazzling to behold; and thus she stood in the midst of a race foreign and uncomprehending, except that a divine instinct impressed them with awe. The light of the burning torches illuminated the far-off arches, changing the pellucid pendants of the roof to topaz, sapphire and ruby; showing vista beyond vista of snowy arch and crystal dome, resplendent in a thousand prismatic hues, and she in the midst, like some embodiment of supernatural beauty; a dazzling creature, compounded of those elemental forces which preside over rock and fall, such as the genius of Greece has left as the creations of the classical mind.

The Indians beheld her with awe, and knelt before her. Even the vindictive Acashee stood silent, spell-bound, by a spirit which had mastered her own.

At length slowly raising her hand upward, she spoke in a

clear voice, and yet with a something in its tone as if it came a long distance.

"I behold a band of warriors—brave as the bravest. I hear the cry of derision—the vaunt of the warrior. Slowly the mist is ascending—I see the hand of a woman, and before it fly the brave men, a thousand pale specters trooping to the spirit-land!"

With a deep sigh she turned her eyes downward, placed her hand upon the head of a pet panther, which crouched at her feet, and slowly moved away under the gorgeous canopy of overhanging pearl and amethyst, and disappeared in the distance.

The Indians listened aghast, and watched her receding figure till it disappeared. They coupled her prediction with the ambiguous words of the priest, and they became filled with doubt and dismay.

In the long years of her imprisonment, ignorant of the place of her seclusion, conscious only that its distance must be great from all that she had known or loved, for she had traveled days and even weeks before her captors reached the falls, she had despaired of ever again beholding a white human face. She had been taken while sleeping under the bed of the river, and placed as we find her, like some ancient priestess, alone in this vast temple, to await divine oracles.

To the eye of the Indian she had been passive; she had awed him by her calm self-reliance; she had held him in subjection by a power allied to prophecy, which came upon her, how and when she knew not. She spoke, and they listened with profound awe; she commanded and they obeyed.

Once, a chief had told her of the departure of her father and all the household from the colony, but the name of John Bonyton had not sounded upon her ears in all this weary time, till it was pronounced by Acashee. At that sound, years were annihilated, the torpor of time vanished, and Hope Vines trembled with the newly-awakened emotions of her early days.

With that audacious activity which marked the action of her childhood, Hope had practiced one feat totally unknown to her captors. She had watched the advent of visitors to the cave, and found they always appeared at one particular side of the water, and that without much apparent effort. Following up this suggestion, she had dared the attempt, and found it achieved with little difficulty. Often, when her captors were buried in sleep, Hope darted below the jutting waters, and landed upon a smooth rock at the river-brink.

She was a child of bright and varied fancies, and to her mind, the wild magnificence that met her eye was a full reward for the danger she incurred. The gorgeous beauty of the grotto, also, afforded her exhaustless emotions of delight, and believing herself forever debarred from all companionship with her own

people, she yielded to the romance which surrounded her with something more than content.

She recalled the story of her kinsman, Sir Walter Raleigh, with whose melancholy history she felt herself allied, and believed this imprisonment of hers was a part of that mysterious link which always had woven her destiny with his, and she unconsciously resigned herself to the position for which she had been destined by her captors. By them she had been abducted, because they believed in her supernatural gifts, and Acashee had lent herself to the plan that she might sever her forever from the companionship of John Bonyton.

Acashee had been compelled to avoid the Pool ever after the abduction of Hope. She could resign the man whom she had learned to love with a wild infatuation, conscious that he had never returned her love, but she could not resign him to a rival. Blighted in her own hope, revenge took the place of the gentler emotion, and the Indian woman felt a strange delight in contemplating in her own mind the misery she had occasioned in another.

A party of her tribe having been surprised by the Sacos, and herself taken prisoner, Acashee had again beheld John Bonyton, and felt a revival in her breast of that fatal love which had for years been the bane of her existence; but when he had recognized her, when he had cut away those locks, as precious to the Indian maiden as the snood to the Highland virgin, or the scalp-lock to the warrior, her hatred knew no bounds, and she resolved, with the consent of the chiefs, to hide herself in the sacred cave of the Pejipscoot till her hair should grow again, and where she might feast her eyes upon the misery of Hope Vines; but silence and solitude are great prompters, and she, who had come to revile and torture, found herself awed in the presence of one whose claims to superior and supernatural wisdom she had heretofore met with derisive skepticism.

CHAPTER XX.

THE VIGIL.

THUS passed away many a night and day. Hope waited and watched and hoped, but in vain. Her companion never relaxed her vigilance, but her cold irony, her malignant sneer, had given place to a deference amounting to awe. Hope was calm, grave and taciturn; her old freakishness had all gone, and in its place was that quiet, burning look, allied only to subdued passion.

At length Hope divined, from the preparations made by her keepers, that some important event was about to transpire. As midnight approached, a group of the chief men of the tribe emerged from amid the spray at the entrance of the grotto, and seated themselves in front of the council-fire. Burning torches were placed under the arches, and the cave glowed with the ruddy light of a crackling fire in the center.

Acashee, blessed or cursed with an almost sleepless vitality, paced the solitary and echoless void in a tumult of contending passions. She was dressed with care, and had, since her return, assumed the air and tone of one who had a right to command.

Hope slept, or affected to sleep, in front of the stone of sacrifice, couched amid snowy furs gorgeously ornamented with wampum, and branches of evergreen, cool and aromatic, spread at her feet. Several familiar pets slumbered around the fair and mystic-enshrouded form, while the panther had placed his broad head upon her shoulder.

As Acashee paced back and forth, she sometimes paused in front of this dainty couch, and eyed the recumbent Hope with a malignant scowl that showed the envy and rage that contended within, but, as Hope had said, she dared not lift a finger against her; and as Hope was now doomed to perpetual imprisonment, separated forever, as she deemed, from John Bonyton, her revenge grew like honey under the tongue, because of the protracted misery of its object.

More than once, as Acashee thus paused in front of Hope, the panther raised himself into a couchant attitude, and eyed her with a sidelong glance, as a cat will watch a mouse, which she is sure is within reach, and therefore may be allowed to gambol with impunity.

At length Acashee stopped her weary pacing to and fro, and leaned with folded arms against a massive stalactite, and eyed the consulting chiefs in silence; but as they planned, discussed and advised, she was called upon to participate in their deliberations, and her suggestions were often hailed with tokens of approval; for the woman was of a keen and penetrating mind, stimulated by passions at once powerful and malevolent.

Had the party observed the white occupant of the sumptuous couch, they would have been aware of a pair of dark, bright eyes peering through those snowy locks, and red lips parted in the eagerness of the intent ear.

"Has the scout arrived?" asked Acashee.

"Fleet-foot has returned, and the Sacos are coming to reclaim tribute of the Androscoggins."

"When will the Sacos be upon the trail?"

"They are already on their way; they have landed at the meeting of the waters."

"Why await their coming? Why sit here and invite the tomahawk and the brand? Give me the war-club of a chief, and I

will teach them what it is to follow the trail of the Androscoggin!"

The fierce fervor of the woman was not lost upon the council of chiefs, but they replied, gravely:

"Listen, daughter of Samoset! Thou shalt wear the eagle-plume, for thy courage and thy wisdom are becoming to a chief."

"When arrived the Sacos at the meeting of the rivers?" asked Acashee.

"As the sun went down."

"Where is the Sagamore of Saco?"

"He leads the expedition."

Acashee walked back and forth, and then stooped over the couch of Hope, and listened. Apparently she slept, for she returned to the council-fire.

It may be that the effort at concealment had been too great for the nerves of Hope, for hardly had the woman turned away when a low sound, like a human wail, escaped from the couch. Acashee again bent over the recumbent form, but there was no sign of consciousness, no winking of the eye, no perturbation. The panther rolled himself over, stretched out his claws, and threw back his head, showing his long, red tongue and glittering teeth, and uttered a yawn so nearly a howl, that the woman believed the sounds identical, and the warriors resumed their discussion.

"In an hour the moon will set," said Acashee.

"Our young warriors lean upon their arms. When the moon is down we light a fire *above the falls, at Still-Water*. This will be the signal for the Terrentines to join us. They will there leave their canoes in the hands of the women, and join our warriors on the bank below. The fire will warn our people how near to approach the falls, for the night will be dark."

"It is well planned," said Acashee.

"Has Wa-ain (White Spirit) spoken?" asked an old chief.

"She has had a vision of battle."

"How went it with the Androscoggins?"

"There is nothing but victory to the brave," she answered, evading the truth.

The old chief was not deceived. He eyed her with a keen, penetrating look, but said not a word.

Presently the group dispersed themselves to rest till the moon should set. The guardians of the cave inverted the torches, and a dim, sepulchral light played over the features of the sleeping warriors.

Acashee retired into a distant recess, and there practiced those incantations supposed to augur success in any contemplated enterprise.

Waiting till all was silent, Hope gathered her little figure closely to the floor of the cave, and slowly made her way to the

entrance, nearing which, the roar of the waters made her movements less perceptible. In breathless silence she passed the council-fire, and threaded her way amid the group around it. She was cautious but fearless. A chief turned in his sleep; she stood erect with flashing eye. Her hand grasped the war-club beside him; had he moved again there was no mistaking the deadly purpose of the girl; but he slept on.

Her step was now firm, her air determined: She cast back a hurried glance—all was silent. With a bound she plunged amid the world of waters. A moment more and she stood upon the rocky plateau at the foot of the falls.

The moon was nearly down, and a thick mist hung over the river, of which the slight form of Hope seemed only a part. She stood for a few seconds and gave a soft but hurried glance at the majestic scenery—the starry sky, over which rushed the hurrying clouds, which herald the coming storm, and the mass of waters, pouring itself forever over its shelving steep.

Then she gathered her long hair into a knot, and with rapid feet ascended the bank. She hurried onward until she found the heap of dry wood and torches at Still-Water, and with eager haste she filled her arms and redescended.

She heaped these into a pile *below* the falls. She gathered the broken wood always to be found in juxtaposition with river-banks—wrecked canoes, cast down the stream; riven branches scattered by the whirlwind; and torches left by the women in their wanderings and toils. She had secured the dry pieces reserved for kindling, and she was skilled in the Indian method of producing a blaze by rubbing two sections of dry wood together.

She then seated herself and watched the descent of the moon; with eager eyes she waited till the last faint rim sunk beneath the horizon—till the last quivering ray shot upward, and then left the sky only to the watchful stars.

Then she arose and lighted the beacon-fire.

Quick as lightning shot up the lurid flame, towering in the midnight sky, gleaming, and flashing, and lightening the old woods far and wide.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEAD ASHES.

JOHN BONYTON and his band of warriors had ascended nearly to the foot of the Pejipscoot Falls, where they waited till the first streak of light should send them on their deadly path. The moon had set, and the stars were dimmed by dark clouds,

which flitted across the sky, and now and then disburdened themselves in heavy drops. Gusts of wind swayed the old woods to and fro, and sent the autumnal leaves whirling and eddying on the wings of the fitful blast.

The sagamore had not slept, but his chiefs were couched under the overhanging trees, amid the dense underbrush, and all were buried in profound slumber, while he had whiled away the hours in thought of her who had been to him the one star in the sky of his destiny. He knew that Acashee would never reveal the secret of the fate of Hope; therefore he had counseled to liberate her, and note in what direction her steps should lead, and he well divined that there Hope would be found.

While thus the solitary man gnawed his heart in vain regrets, and sorrowful fancies, he became aware of a movement further up the stream. Now and then a spark shot upward, and was lost amid the white spray of the falls; then another, and another struggled amid smoke and vapor, and was lost; till at last one fierce volume of flame towered upward, revealing not only his own encampment, but the vast old woods, and the river pouring itself, an ocean of water, from its mountain-height into the abysm below.

The warriors sprung to their feet, and gazed in wonder, not unmingled with dismay, but the sagamore motioned them back to their covert, while he should learn the secret of this unexpected beacon-fire. Emerging from the covert of the woods, he was aware of a white form that flitted before him. Hurrying onward, he leaped from rock to rock, vainly striving to reach the object, which still eluded his grasp. At length, having reached an angle of the stream, the figure turned.

"Hope! Hope!" exclaimed John Bonyton, stretching out his arms.

The figure pointed upward, but even while she made the gesture, she fell prostrate to the earth.

"Oh, my God! be merciful!" cried the sagamore, lifting her in his arms, and even while he spoke the strength of the strong man departed, and he sunk down trembling, for to him it seemed as if the spirit of the girl had fled.

The years of agony—the lapse of thirty years—were concentrated in that moment. All the dull, dreary, lingering aches of rolling months and lengthening years were combined, and plunged into one vast pang.

At length Hope lifted up her head, wringing her hands, with a face white as snow.

"Oh! John Bonyton, did I not tell you so years ago? Did I not see Hope always alone—always desolate?"

"My poor bird!"

Their heads were bowed down, their breathing faint and labored, and low moans escaped them. What was the world to them! Stricken and changed, living and breathing, they only

knew that they lived and breathed by the pangs that revealed the beating pulse.

Oh! life, life! thou art a fearful boon, and thy love not the least fearful of thy gifts!

At length Hope remembered the beacon-fire, and she started wildly to her feet, for if the flame decayed her work would be lost; but there was no fear; the flames had kindled a tall hemlock, heavy with the moss of ages, and this poured forth volumes of fiery tongues, lighting the scene with midday radiance. She pointed to the beacon, and would have spoken, but the sagamore held her firmly in his arms, and smoothing back her white hair, he murmured:

"Thou shalt never leave me again, my tender, my beautiful bird! It has fared ill with thee."

It was a melancholy contrast—he in the full flush of his noble manhood, gathering the diminutive creature, like a lost lamb, in his arms—he, tall and commanding, she bleached by solitude and grief.

Something of this he felt, for a paternal tenderness caused the tears to gush to his eyes, and he kissed her brow reverently, saying:

"How I have searched for thee, my birdie! my fair child! I have been haunted by the fairies, and goaded well-nigh to madness; but thou art here—yet not thou. Oh, Hope! Hope!"

She listened intent and breathless; she forgot all else, all but the tones of the dear voice, the music of her life; but, hearing these last words, she cried:

"Why did you go over the vast waters, John Bonyton? I knew it would be so. I knew, if we parted, we could never be the same again. The same cloud returns not to the sky; the same blossom blooms not twice; human faces wear not twice the same look; and, alas! alas! the heart of to-day is not that of to-morrow."

Her eyes had been fixed on the face of her lover, but as she went on, they were raised upward from his loving eyes—upward from his noble brow, and gazed away into the far-off and unknown, with a weird, wistful earnestness, as we have seen a child's eyes fixed as the spirit found its way to the crystal gates of Paradise.

The sagamore seemed to listen when her voice had ceased; but at length he said, softly:

"Say on, Hope; do not stop. Years are annihilated, and we are children once more, gathering pebbles on the beach and blossoms in the woods!"

"Let me go, John Bonyton!" cried Hope, convulsively, at these words.

"No, never again! We will live the old life—the life of which we dreamed years ago, Hope."

A faint smile played over the lips of the girl, but she whispered:

"When the torch is consumed to ashes, no power can rekindle the flame."

"Do not speak despairingly, Hope. We will not rejoin those cold, hard hypocrites whom we both abhor. No, no; look up, my child; take heart, dear heart. We will build us up a bower in some lovely dell, where the birds shall sing all day, and innocent creatures resort for love of thee, and we will worship God with true hearts, and live as the beautiful Miranda of Shakespeare lived, only instead of Prospero it shall be Miranda and Ferdinand. Dost understand, love?"

While the sagamore thus poured out his poetic rhapsody with beaming eyes, and looks unutterably tender, Hope's dreamy eyes were fixed on the vapors circling the falls, which were ever and anon swept aside by the gusty wind which stirred in the bare branches of the trees. It was evident that much in the mind of her lover was to her a sealed book. Perhaps John Bonyton felt something of the kind. Who has not, at some time, poured out the unfathomed wealth of a soul upon an arid desert!

Perhaps he felt that *his* thought was not *her* thought—his *love* was not her *love*, for he replied to the dreamy eyes:

"Yes, dear Hope, we will be content to think, not talk. Thou shalt call me brother, as in the olden time, and I thee, sister."

"John Bonyton, Hope is no more than the old Hope. Thou art—right royal."

And as if this expressed more to her than its words would seem to convey, she for the first time threw her arms about his neck. Then she pressed her lips to his in one wild, passionate burst, and withdrew herself from his arms.

"For the first and the last time," she had exclaimed, "thus—thus do I steep my soul in thine. Now go—go; I can not live to see thee look with a weary heart—a *half-heart*, upon the Hope who is all thine."

While the solitary child, pure as the unnamed crystal that hung from the cave in which she had been so long immured, gave expression to that untutored tenderness which she felt was to be a dream of the past, the sagamore suddenly started forward, and pointed to a high rock by the margin of the falls, upon which appeared the tall figure of Acashee. Hope saw her with a faint smile, which was not lost upon her lover.

A moment more, and a group of amazed and horror-stricken warriors occupied the shore by her side. They lifted up their hands aghast at the fearful spectacle—they leaped from rock to rock in fierce efforts to extinguish the fatal blaze, but in vain. The burning hemlock towered in fearful splendor, sending forth jets of flame, an object of beauty no less than of terror. And now the Saco warriors, rushing from their ambush, dealt sure

destruction upon all but Acashee, who stood unmoved and unharmed. In vain did she invite the blow, by chanting, in a voice which rose above the roar of the falls and the roar of the beacon-fire, her fiery death-song—she stood unharmed.

CHAPTER XXII.

BELOW THE FALLS.

MEANWHILE the beacon-fire had flamed far and wide, and wakened the warriors to the anticipated work of destruction. The Terrentines, far up at the great bend of the Androscoggin, were ready with blackened faces, and armed with war-club, tomahawk and arrow, to wreak their utmost vengeance upon the tribes of the Saco; and no sooner did the gleam of the beacon-fire stream luridly up the moonless sky, than they launched their canoes and descended the stream.

The Androscoggins also, with their little navy above Still-Water, floated downward with the very flower of the tribe, and before the sun should arise, the Sagamore of Saco, and his band of warriors, should be no more known than the cloud which yesterday dimmed the horizon, or the vapor which lost itself in the far-off ocean. Such was their thought.

With light and measured dip of paddle, onward came the airy fleet, light as the spray, and buoyant with exultant hearts. The vast woods swayed fitfully; the night-bird wheeled in ghostly circles, and went screaming away to deeper solitudes. The bark of the fox and the howling of the wolf mingled with the screeching of the owl, and the voices of a thousand ill-omened echoes screamed from the recesses of rock, mountain and river, and yet onward swept the fleet, unconscious of danger.

The scouts, whose duty it had been to light the beacon at Still-Water, *above* the falls, started to their feet with horror, as canoe after canoe emerged from the shadow of the river-bank, and floated onward—past the level stream, past the village lights, and were caught in the descending flood.

Nearing the village above the falls, the women and children, suddenly conscious of the danger, rushed with wild shouts and gestures of warning.

Too late—too late! The rapid and insidious current could not be resisted. As well might a straw be hoped to bridge Niagara, as the stoutest arm of the warrior hope to stay the downward swoop of the frail canoe, caught in the fierce tide of the roaring waters.

Ever and ever poured on the untiring flood, till one wondered it did not pour itself out. The heart grew oppressed at the vastness of its images, crowding and rolling and pressing, as did the tumultuous waves over their rocky steep. Water—still water, till the nerves ached from weariness at its perpetual flow, and the mind questioned if the sound were not silence, so lonely was the spell—questioned, if the sound ceased, whether the heart would not cease to beat, and life become extinct.

The winds suddenly died away; the stars came out each upon his golden throne and looked down upon the scene. John Bonyton and Hope stood not far from the beacon-fire, which sent its jets of light far and wide.

Suddenly, a wild, unearthly yell filled the air. It rose loud and piercing, and the roar of the waters was lost in one vast, terrible cry of agony.

The chiefs of the Sacos gathered about their sagamore. Hope pointed to the white foam of the falls; her eyes dilated with delight; her form expanded, and in that moment of exultation she looked like some beautiful, but avenging spirit.

"Look, John Bonyton! Behold the handiwork of Hope Vines!"

A black mass gleamed amid the white foam; another and another; and yet a wild yell of horror—a black, descending mass, poised one moment upon the verge—a fearful plunge, and the old river took up its ancient song, and went its way to the far-off deep, to be lost in the vast ocean.

"Tell me, what is this?" cried John Bonyton, seizing the hand of Hope, and conscious of an undefined horror at a nameless deed.

Hope saw the changed look—saw the fierce eye of the sagamore, and her high spirit quailed before it. Exultation gave place to defiance, for one brief space, and then she waved her hand and would have darted away, had he not detained her.

"Tell me, Hope, I beseech thee—tell me the meaning of this dreadful scene—more terrible than the fiercest struggle, foot to foot, of armed men!"

"I have saved thee, John Bonyton," whispered Hope.

"Tell me all, Hope—what it all means."

She lifted her head proudly—she fixed her deep, dark eyes upon his, and spoke with a clear voice, that reverberated fearfully upon the silence.

"Hear me, John Bonyton. For years and years I have had but one thought—one desire—one aim—to see thee once more. I will not tell thee of the long, long, weary years—winters of hoary frost and snow, summers of brief beauty—which went and came, and I saw them not—I saw nothing but thee, John Bonyton. I was moody and silent, but a power was born of solitude, of waiting, of longing, and I could go and come beneath yonder falls. When all slept, I went forth to look upon the moon,

because it lighted thee. When the sun came forth, it rejoiced me only that its rays were life and light to thee.

"No one knew I could find my way out of the cave—no one knew of the one burning thought that consumed my whole life. At length I heard thy name; I heard of the approach of the Sacos, led by John Bonyton; I listened to the council of the chiefs, and learned that a beacon-fire was to be kindled *above* the falls, and then the tribes would descend the bank of the river, and carry death and destruction to the camp of John Bonyton.

"I kindled the beacon-light *below* the falls!"

She turned away proudly.

"Do not go, Hope. Where *will* you go?" cried the sagamore.

"Where, but to death and the grave?" she responded, bitterly.

"Hope, my *only* hope, come to me; all is black, desolate—do not leave me."

She looked up with so pale a face, so hopeless, so mournfully tender, it was affecting to behold.

"I will go under the falls, and there sleep—oh! so long will I sleep, John Bonyton. The wounded doe seeks the deepest covert in which to die."

She turned away, but the sagamore, rushing forward, folded her in his arms, saying:

"You must not leave me, Hope; do you not love me?"

She answered by a low wail, more eloquent than words, and it was long before her sobs allowed her utterance. At length, she looked up with a wistful, earnest gaze, and answered:

"I see it all now, John Bonyton. I see that Hope is a child, you are man. Hear me say it all—I am a child such as I was years ago; you are not the John Bonyton who played with pebbles upon the beach. Look at the eagle-plume! Look at the eye so dark and terrible! My heart, my brain, has been filled with but one thought, and that is John Bonyton. Look into my soul, it has but one record—only one record—John Bonyton; but you—you are great, powerful, beautiful. Hope is nothing—nothing!"

Her voice was lost in tears, and if the strong man felt the truth of what she said, he was not the less tender, nor the less fervent in his protestations of unchanged and unchanging love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TORCH EXTINGUISHED.

THE sun began to tinge the sky with its ruddy hue ; the birds filled their little space of late autumnal song, and the shrill cicada piped amid the rustling leaves. The rainbow spanned the abyss of waters, while below, drifting in eddies, were fragments of canoes, spears and bows, and still more ghastly fragments, telling of the night's work.

Upon the headland overlooking the falls, and hidden by the heavy but stunted vegetation of the rocky height, stood a small group of ancient warriors, the sole remnant of a once powerful band. These, after taking into their unwilling minds the terrible truth of ambush, defeat and death, stole away to the village to hasten the departure of the women and children.

Not so Acashee. She watched intently the group below in the midst of which floated the white, abundant locks of Hope Vines. With jealous rage she saw the sagamore fold the slight form to his breast ; with wild, jealous admiration she noted the manly form, the bright, tender eye—so fierce in its last look upon herself, when he cut away her virgin locks, so gentle as it fell upon the face of Hope.

As the extreme of agony merges into a sensation of pleasure, so the malign passions of Acashee were prolonged in this contemplation of the tenderness of the lovers, till she could no more endure, and she drew an arrow to its head, aimed at the heart of her rival.

Hope started, gave one last look of love at the sagamore, and then darted up the bank, up the projecting curve of water that indicated the entrance to the grotto, and thence disappeared. Her path was marked by a long trail of blood, staining the rocks like a slender serpent.

Acashee did not fly. On the contrary, she boldly stood out upon the headland, and it was a grand sight, the tall, fearless woman in her proud attitude, standing there courting the death she had inflicted.

"Acashee is avenged, John Bonyton," she cried ; but her voice was stopped by a hundred arrows, hurtling the air, and penetrating her flesh—"blood from every pore," as Hope predicted. She did not quail, but, with a buoyant motion of feet and arms, she sung her death-song :

"Look from your misty caves, heroes and warriors !
Bend from your storm-clouds—a maiden approaches,
Slain by brave warriors—she brave as the best."

Arrow after arrow drank her blood while thus she sung—and at length she toppled headlong into the boiling flood below.

Fierce was the pursuit and desperate the flight of the surviving Androscoggins, and the Sagamore of Saco, with his followers, never rested, day nor night, till the last vestige of the Terrentines was rooted up. To this day, in the village of Lewiston, now a thriving and wealthy manufacturing city, the new settler, digging the foundation for his princely mansion, often unearths half-consumed brands, and, sad to tell, the small skull of the child, thus designating the site of the old Indian village, and attesting to the truth of that tradition, which still preserves the memory of the destruction of the Androscoggins as we have described, and the conflagration of the village above the falls of the Pejipscot.

No white man has ventured to solve the mystery of the grotto under the sheet of water, where rest the ashes of Hope Vines.

A story is still extant to this effect: Many years ago, while Lewiston was a small village, retaining its Indian name of Pejipscot, a young man was standing on the shelf of rock, which we have described, and where we have often stood ourselves, spell-bound by the majestic scenery, when suddenly, from amidst the foam and spray, appeared an old man, and stood upon the rocks beside him. His hair was of a snowy whiteness, but his eye flashed with the fires of youth as he beheld the white stranger upon the rock.

Before the latter could recover from his amazement, to inquire of his advent, the old Indian seized him in his arms and dashed him to the earth; when he recovered to look about him, he saw his aggressor rapidly paddling his canoe down the river.

For years John Bonyton lingered about the falls, in the vain desire of seeing once more the pale, spectral beauty of Hope Vines, but she appeared no more in the flesh.

Tradition delights to recall her story, and to this day, men not romantic nor visionary declare to have seen a figure, slight and beautiful, clad in snowy robes, with moccasined feet, and hair covering her form like a veil, moving sorrowfully about the falls, and the strange figure they believe to be the wraith of Hope Vines.

Thus does tradition preserve the memory of the beloved of the Sagamore of Saco.

John Bonyton at length rejoined the Sacos at what is now known as Salmon Falls. (We ought to say that this word is pronounced as if written *Sauco*.) He lived to extreme old age, an object of love and veneration to the people who had chosen him for their chief, or sagamore, and reviled, hated and despised by the people of the colony.

At his death he refused to be buried in the "grave-yard" of the decorous Pilgrims of the day, but gave directions for his

repose not far from the beautiful falls of the Saco, within the sound of those waters which had witnessed his sorrows, his mortifications and his triumphs—whose roar had been to him a perpetual inspiration. Here, for years, was pointed out the rude stone, with its malignant epitaph, which marked the grave of a man born out of place.

The epitaph of John Bonyton ran in this wise:

"Here lies John Bonyton, Sagamore of Saco;

He lived a rogue, and died a knave, and went to Hobomoko."

This ungracious rhyme was current in the colony of Maine somewhere about 1684, being the epitaph of a man little understood in his own times, and greatly traduced by the pen of novelist, if not of the historian. When the reader understands that Hobomoko, or Hobomok, was the Indian appellation for the father of lies, it will be seen that the sarcasm or slander, whichever it may be, was the more inveterate.

THE END.

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OR,

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THE SILENT HUNTER.

CHAPTER V.

THE SILENT HUNTER'S CACHE.

THE trail was clear and obvious. There were the marks of the Indians' feet, of the girl's moccasins, and the hoofs of the loaded horse, of the cow, and the grunting drove of pigs, that straggled every now and then as they went along, and were driven into order, or goaded to advance at the point of a lance. They were able in this way, with so sure a track, to proceed with considerable activity and ease, the more that the route was a beaten trail which the Indians were wont to use on their many friendly visits to the Crow's Nest, where hitherto they had been received with extreme friendliness by the hearty woodman, who had often hunted with them, and even fought with them, when quite a boy, against their hereditary foes.

They trod upon the trail then, one after another in deep silence, until the wind began to sigh over the trees, the gloom to collect overhead, and the forest began to assume that mysterious and solemn appearance which is always presented by extensive woods on the first approach of night. It was about a quarter of an hour before dark that they came in sight of a stream, one of the tributaries of the Scioto river.

"Hist!" said Custa to his companions, who were moving listlessly on, Harvey admiring with the eye of an artist the changes produced on the leaves by the crepuscular light, the Silent Hunter moodily reflecting on the past, and brooding on the future.

All three stood instantly like statues, though a tremulous nervousness shook for an instant the stout frame of Harrod. Then they gazed curiously where the finger of the Indian pointed to a small column of smoke rising from the water's edge. They again advanced, but no longer on the trail, having concealed themselves beneath the deep shadows of the interior of

the forest. In another instant they saw that it was an abandoned fire, and they immediately emerged freely into the small open space by the banks of the stream. All three instantly sought the trail on that side first, and then on the other, by wading. But all trace of the whole party was gone.

"This is Indian devilry with a vengeance," said Harvey, angrily. "Have they spirited her away, or have they hid in the trees?"

"Hist!" replied Custa, "there are ears in the forest. Look at the stricken pine—he has no tongue—he is silent as the tall tree of the forest that rocks the humming-bird to rest, and sings no lullaby that can wake the echoes."

"If he ain't got a tongue, and a *locrum* is inconvenient to him," continued Harvey, smiling, "he has got eyes—look, he has found something."

Harrod was on the other side of the stream near the fire, and when they joined him they found that he had discovered the bones and some small parts of the cow, which had been slaughtered and in part devoured. The horse was also immediately afterwards found, just behind the bushes, cropping some grass, and so hobbled that it could not go far away.

"Ugh!" said Custaloga, in a low whisper.

"This is the queerest start I ever saw. I guess we've got an ounce of dust in our eyes, or we can't see for the dark. I suspect they are just hid close by."

The Silent Hunter shook his head.

"Water is soft, and earth is hard; but the earth leaves a mark and water shows no trail."

"That's it," said Harvey; "they had canoes—by gum, they must be in force. They've slummucked the pigs and the cow-beef, and left no mark."

"In the morning we will rub our eyes and see clear," replied Custa; "they have put the plunder and prisoners in the canoes, and

have walked. But they are not coons; they will not deceive a Wyandot. In the morning we will find their trail."

"I suppose you are about right," said Harvey, "and that we're bound to wait. But this is a hot-tish place for a camp, I conclude, Custa. My scalp kind of crawls at the idea of sleeping here."

The Silent Hunter made a sign for them to follow him. They clearly understood by his manner that he had a better place to show them, and they had already, by his directions, entered the bed of the river in an upward direction, and were fifty feet from the fire, when he clutched them both violently, and imposed solemn silence by a gesture which was not to be mistaken.

The gloom had now settled on forest and plain, the song of birds, the gobble of the turkey, the cry of the sandhill crane had ceased, and naught was heard save the low whispering of the trees, as their heads met and kissed, and that mysterious song of nature, a kind of low, hushed, broken chord of some Eolian harp, that often accompanies in vast solitudes the setting of the hot sun—the fall of night being felt almost as well as heard.

But a step was in the forest—a step advancing stealthily, it is true, but with some little want of caution at times, as if the benighted stranger were sure of finding friends round the fire which he saw blazing in the distance; for the woodmen had purposely roused it from its dying state and made it blaze on high.

Then a dark form appeared on the edge of the circle of light, the very extreme edge, peering slowly around, listening with the ear of a startled deer. Something made him dart back to seek cover, but it was too late. Simultaneous with the click came the sheet of flame and the swift messenger of death. He bounded on high, gave a wild yell, and then fell flat

near the fire. Harrod, who had done this deed, went quietly back, finished the unfortunate wretch, and then came to join his companions, who conversed in inaudible whispers relative to the conduct of Harrod, which was clearly that of a man who had bound himself down to a mission of revenge.

In another instant he was by their side, and passing them, led up the stream toward what the two hunters well knew as the Devil's Gully. They had implicit reliance on the woodcraft of their huge and fearless companion, who knew every turning in the forest; but still they had so often, during panther and deer hunts, visited the spot, that they could not understand how he was about to use that place for the purposes of concealment.

In about ten minutes the water began to rush swiftly by, the banks came nearer and nearer, they were wading far above their knees, and then they stood at the mouth of the Devil's Gully.

The night was dark, but, their eyes now growing accustomed to the gloom, they could distinguish the principal features of the scene. The banks of the river were now suddenly projected upward to a height of fifty feet, about half the way up precipitous rock, with a bush desperately clinging here and there, the other half a shelving mixture of earth and stone dotted with trees and shrubs. Below, in the depths of the gully, all was dark; even the silvery thread of water, that in the day, when the sun dived down to cool its rays in the very caverns of the night, might be seen running swiftly along, could now only be heard, rumbling, rushing, dashing by like the waters of a sluice.

Harvey could not restrain an exclamation.

"This is almighty grand!" he said. "I guess they don't beat this in the island."

"Come," replied Custa. Harrod had disappeared.

"Hillo! where is he?" exclaimed Harvey. "He ain't carried away by the water, is he?"

"Come," said Custa, again; "there is a trail in the swift water. Let your hand never leave the left rock. The eyes of an eagle could not see—we must feel like moles."

Harvey obeyed, and found, by keeping his hand gliding along the rock, that he thus walked on a ledge, that was scarcely covered by the water, which swept furiously by, deep, within two inches of where he walked. They moved in utter darkness. They saw nothing but the rock they touched with their hands; they heard nothing but the swift current to their right.

Harvey was advancing, still wondering when all this groping in the dark would end, peering forward to try and catch a glimpse of those who preceded him, when suddenly his hand slipped from the damp, cold rock onto what appeared stubble, and he heard the voice of Custa by his side instead of before.

"Wagh," said the Indian, whose manners, language, mien, actions, were one continual struggle between his savage and civilized instincts, those of childhood and those of manhood—"a beaver in a dam, a fox in a hollow tree, an otter in a hole, never made such a *cache* as this. Wagh! it is good."

A torch which the Silent Hunter now lit with his tinder-box, revealed to Harvey the nature of the place. It was a niche in the rock, about fifteen feet high, ten across the mouth, and as many deep, overhung so by the two banks that even a fire could not betray it, while even in the daytime smoke would have been dispersed ere it reached the summit of the tall trees.

"It's a rare burrow—a reg'lar fox's hole. I expect many an old four-legged red-skin has done the dogs here, and will ag'in. My! It's beautiful. This is your old *cache*, when you came up here

afore there were any settlers in these parts."

Harrod bowed his head.

He had fixed the torch in a piece of wood which had been cut and planted for the purpose. He left the two friends to do the rest, though he showed them a hole in a corner, where there were wood, deer-meat, a jug, and some skins. Harvey and Custa quickly made a fire and cooked their supper, which having finished—in this passively imitated by Harrod—they lit their pipes and prepared for a "big talk" on the duties they had to perform—duties which did not affect them in an equal degree; for what can equal, what be like, the earnest solicitude of a passionate lover, whose mistress is in the hands of such ruthless beings as the wild savages of North America?

And Custaloga, the brave and devoted Wyandot, did love Amy with all the wild ardor of his half-tamed nature—loved her, too, without hope, without future, without an idea that his love could ever be aught save a dream—and thus, perhaps, had his affection risen to the greater height, as it was invested with a melancholy and sadness, which to his wayward nature, but half conquered by education, was not without its charm.

Custaloga loved Amy, the affianced bride of Squire Barton, for whom he had an instinctive dislike, which, however, had never manifested itself as yet in any way save that already described. He ignored his existence.

Amy saw this and wondered.

But her secrets we are not privileged to reveal until the day and hour when she avows them herself, and deprives them of that veil of obscurity and doubt which we may not raise, even though, from the journals, notes, and letters before us, we have already mastered the mystery.

"What is Harrod up to?" whispered Harvey, as soon as he had

loaded his pipe to his own satisfaction.

Custaloga looked not to the right or left, and yet his eagle eye had caught the outward character of his occupation in an instant. He was whittling.

In his hand was a long piece of pine-wood, which he was striving to bring into shape with his hunting-knife. After some labor he succeeded to his satisfaction, for he ceased and proceeded to bore a hole through one end, through which he afterward passed a thong. *He then, with a grim and ghastly smile, cut one notch.*

All this while the two friends, who were thinking over their plans, had watched him in silence. But as he cut the notch Harvey gave a cry of surprise and horror.

"It's a tally, Custa. Hundred thunders!" cried he, "what a mole-eyed, one-eyed gunner I am not to have seen it afore. It's a tally, and that notch is for the first Indian. Why that stick will hold a matter of two hundred."

"On the waters of the wide lake," said Custa, holding up his hand toward the north, "the red-skins wear a bead for every scalp. Our white brother cuts a mark in a little bit of wood. Carry it about like the little gods of the priests."

"Bah!" said Harvey, "not our priests; you will confound the Romans with us."

"They all worship the same Father," replied Custa, in a low tone, talking rather to himself than to Harvey; "why does one man say one thing, one another?"

Custa sighed. As yet religion had not fully touched his heart. He understood Christianity to a certain extent, and yet the faith was not in him, though Amy and Jane had both striven for years, aided by Clara's father, to open his eyes.

The Eccentric Artist made no reply, not wishing to enter upon a topic which had often induced heated arguments between them.

He smoked his pipe with redoubled vigor, and gazed with a mysterious awe at the bereaved husband, whose kindly nature and warm heart appeared to have utterly fled before the fierce, untamed passion of revenge.

To speak to him he knew was useless now while the night of sorrow and wrath was on his soul, concealing all that was bright and good on earth, and prompting him only to deeds of darkness.

"Harvey," said Custaloga, when he had smoked his calumet pipe in peace for some time, "my heart is very sad; the singing-bird is safe in the wigwam of her father; but the queen-bird is silent in the lodge of the Shawnees."

"She is, Custa," replied Harvey, moodily, "and must be got out, if we fight the whole tribe of dingy catamounts."

"My brother," said Custa, affectionately, "is a brave, and not a boaster; he talks of fighting a cloud of men, but he does not mean it. The Shawnee villages are as many as the weeks of the year, and each village has more warriors than there are days."

"Then by all the b'ars in Kentucky, what is to be done?" exclaimed Harvey, impatiently.

"When a fox sees a fat partridge in the grass he does not fly at it, because he has no wings; he creeps and glides, while the birds nestle; and though they do fly, he is quicker than they, and runs into the woods with his prize."

"I understand you, Custa; you are up to some devilry you learnt among the Wyandots. Well, well, it's your natur', Custa, and I won't gainsay it. Besides, in the woods it's right—I know it is. Indians ain't regiments, and forests ain't regular battle-fields. What do you propose?"

The young Indian rose to speak. There was none of the semi-educated gentleman about him now. He was all red. He laid down his calumet and his rifle, and assumed all the dignified mien of a chief

and a warrior. The two white men looked at him—Harrod vacantly and listlessly, Harvey with that deep earnestness, that strong affection, which, by some strange instinct, the secret of which he little knew, he had always felt for Custaloga.

"The Shawnees are women. There are beasts in the forest, and birds in the air, and fish in the streams, and warriors in the great hunting-ground under the setting sun; but they are too lazy to hunt the forest, too idle to shoot the bird, too stupid to fish the stream, too cowardly to fight with men. There are a few long-knives in the woods, men who make themselves wigwams, and grow corn to make themselves their bread, and hunt, and fish like red-men, doing them no harm. And they buried the hatchet, and smoked the calumet of peace with the Indians. But the Shawnees are skunks—they shake hands with the right arm, and kill with the left. They have come like red foxes, and they have stolen the queen bird"—here he spoke fiercely, and then his voice sunk to a melancholy softness that was quite musical in its deep, mellow sadness—"they came like cowards, like skunks and pole-cats, and they have killed a woman, and the little pappoose that could not walk, and stolen the little bounding-deer, the son of the pale-face with the large heart. They are gone, like beasts, to burrow in their holes. But men are behind. Let them look, and they will gaze on warriors; one of them has already seen the face of a brave."

And he bowed gracefully to Harrod, who, however, made no sign.

"The great heart is weary; the friends of Custa need rest. Let them lie in the cache to-night, and follow on the trail when the sun lights the earth. Custa will go alone."

"Where to?" asked Harvey, quickly.

Custaloga then developed his plan, which was simple enough.

There was an Indian village about nine or ten miles off, and though in a straight line, the way was difficult, yet one used to the woods could go and return in a night. Custaloga believed from his intimate knowledge of the tribe to which Tecumseh—the young chief who had saved Amy—belonged, that the prisoners would in the first instance be taken to that place, as the nearest, and also because it was close to the village of Tecumseh himself, who doubtless would claim Amy as his prize.

"But how do you know it was Tecumseh at all?" said Harvey.

"My brother is very quick of eye, but he is not an Indian, born in the woods. Can you read the little marks on a book?"

"Well, Custa, what a question; you know I can."

"And an Indian can read the print of a foot," said the warrior, with a grim smile, as he saw the pun, but could not check it.

"Now for an Injun to make a joke about the print of a foot and the print in a book, is mighty queer," put in Harvey; "wouldn't Jane laugh and show her pretty teeth. She'd say six years' study had done you good, too."

Custaloga remained silent a moment, as if ashamed of his weakness, and then continued his explanation in the same dignified and solemn manner in which he had commenced it.

He proposed to enter the village under cover of the night, trusting to his skin, and discover, roaming about, whether Amy was really there, as this would materially aid their plan the next day. He undertook to return before daylight, in time for a short rest.

"'Tis plaguy risky," said Harvey, moodily. "I don't like it, Custa. A pretty kettle of fish if you get took."

"I will not be taken," replied Custa, simply.

"I know you won't—but you'll be worse," continued Harvey, sulkily.

"Custa will not be scalped—he has long legs," said the Indian, again.

"You promise that? Now mind—if you are found, you'll make tracks and run."

Custa made signs that he would, and then began taking off every particle of dress that looked like an assumption of civilized garb. In an instant he stood almost in a state of nature, an apology for a tunic beginning at his waist and hanging to within four inches of his knees, and his moccasins, being his whole dress. He then took from his hunting-bag the necessary materials, and began painting himself with great care. Harrod, however, quickly took the matter out of his hand, and finished him off so perfectly, that Harvey quite started.

"I wouldn't advise you to let Amy see you," he said, gravely.

"Ugh," replied Custaloga with the deepest guttural sound he had yet uttered.

"You know she don't like you in any Indian fixings—but in that she'd hate you."

The young warrior looked very grave, but made no reply. He was ready, and standing up, his rifle in hand, his horn and shot-pouch hanging from his naked shoulder, he said a quiet good-by, and prepared to depart.

"Nonsense, I'll come down the gully with you—"

"The night is very dark, the stones are slippery—stay—the red-skin warrior will go alone."

"Willful and obstinate, like all his race," said Harvey to himself. "Ah me! it's a risky thing, a very risky thing. The lad must be in love with Amy."

And thus roused, his ideas took another road, and soon led him on to think of Jane; and once directed into this current, he lost all recollection of every thing else, and sunk into one of those dreamy

visions of love and hope and joy, which come sometimes in the still solitude of night, whether we lie in down-beds, or on the hard rock or grassy earth, with naught above us but the canopy of heaven.

At last Harvey fell asleep, but he did not sleep long, for when his eyes opened again, the fire burnt still brightly, and Harrod lay in so deep and heavy a slumber that he could scarcely have replenished it. Harvey sat up, lit a pipe, and his thoughts turning toward the young Indian, he began to feel extremely uneasy. What he had undertaken he knew to be perilous in the extreme—one of those Indian artifices, which succeed sometimes from their extreme boldness and audacity, but which are attended with an amount of danger and difficulty which make them rarely used, or only in extreme cases like the present, where the feelings of the actor impelled him even to the verge of rashness.

Harvey gazed at the sleeper with pity. He lay still now; his stormy passions, his fearful sorrows, his regrets, his anxieties, his burning desire for vengeance, all at rest; and perhaps—who can say?—some sweet and cheering dream of the dear ones, some soft vision of the night was his, giving to his soul some of that pleasant rest which the body derives from cessation from labor.

"He sleeps—poor fellow, I must not wake him," said the artist, gently. He always liked that fearless spirit, that warm-hearted though wild hunter. "How hushed and still this place is! Ah, what is that?"

He leaned down carefully in the dark shadow of the rock, clutching his rifle, as a heavy body was clearly heard above, making its way through the bushes. On the opposite side of the gully the bank rose about twenty feet precipitously, and then sloped back—an inclined plane, covered by shrubs and trees. Through these some body of considerable weight had

appeared to slide, and then stopped close to the edge of the cliff.

Harvey peered cautiously up—it was bright moonlight now—and raised his rifle, expecting every minute to see the glaring eyeballs of an Indian looking down upon them from that height. The noise continued, the bushes parted, and the head of a panther, that had scented out, with his keen and horrid instinct, the presence of men, came looming out in the pale moonlight.

"My!" muttered Harvey, and then without a moment's hesitation, he fired.

A roar, a yell, and then a bound, proclaimed that the savage beast had fallen, or made a spring at them. Harvey instinctively drew back to clutch his knife. The smoke of the gun prevented his seeing any thing at first, and then he beheld the panther, which, wounded and bewildered for an instant, had missed its aim and fallen into the river, preparing for another spring.

The fierce, untamed brute, the only approach to lion or tiger on the American continent, glared wildly at Harvey, and hung out his horrid tongue, just as he prepared for the fatal spring. The artist shuddered, and dropping his gun stood with his back to the wall, his long, keen hunting-knife presented at the beast, the handle resting on his chest. The panther gave a low whine, wagged its tail, and advanced its paws onto the edge of the niche.

This moment was fatal, for at the same instant a dark, shiny object swung in the air, and a huge and ponderous American ax came down with irresistible force on the cranium of the beast, which, stunned, its head split open, fell back with a savage cry and was carried away by the rushing stream.

"My!" said Harvey, drawing a long breath, "that was a sledge-hammer hit, I don't think. Harrod, I'm much beholden to you. I did feel mighty skeered—that fellow

would have eat me up slick. Well, you're off again, are you? You take it quiet I expect. I don't. I mean to have that skin—it's a beauty."

And taking only his knife, Harvey descended onto the ledge, and began groping his way down the gully, which was a little more light than in the evening, under the influence of the moon's pale, cold, and quivering rays, that dropped here and there through the open space between trees and boughs. He advanced the whole length of the gully before he saw any sign of the unfortunate brute; but there at the mouth of the ravine it lay by the bank, motionless, still, quite dead. The tremendous force of the woodman's ax, wielded by such an arm, had caused death to be instantaneous.

"It's a mighty tall brute," said Harvey, who now was a rude trapper—"a mighty tall brute. I expect that skin will make a fine rug for Miss Jane—so, lest the wolves should tear it, which *wud* be a pity, I'll just skin it on the spot."

And he did. He drew it ashore, and there, regardless of danger, laughing at the wolves, forgetting his own lesson to Custaloga, forgetting that the loping and murderous Indians were about, he sat down, and never stopped until the skin was quite clear of the carcass. Then, and only then, he started on his way upward to the niche, carrying his prize in triumph.

He laid it up safely, and then, somewhat tired of his strange occupation, he went soon to sleep, and slept so heavily, that nothing disturbed him, not even the howling of the wolves, as they fought and gorged themselves over the body of the dead panther.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FROG'S HOLE.

MEANWHILE events were elsewhere taking place, which are so essentially necessary to the proper

understanding of our narrative that we must leave Custa to perform his journey, the inhabitants of the block to grieve for Amy, and she herself to continue on her way with the Indians, while we introduce characters who will have much to do with the elucidation of events, and the clearing up of the mystery which attaches to a very large portion of our narrative. The early events of our story have, however, been, in relation to incidents, so rapid that we have not been able to turn to what may in the outset appear a subject of minor interest, but which will in the end be found to be absolutely necessary to the understanding of what follows.

At some distance from the Scioto river, up toward the hills, hitherto chiefly frequented by wild trappers and men of the woods, by bordermen, and by a race of some bandits left by the war, horse-stealers, cow-thieves, and others—about three hours' hard ride from the Moss, and an equal distance from Scowl Hall—was a shanty, log, or farm-house, which had obtained, from the locality in which it was situated, the name of the Frog's Hole. It was notorious by name to most of the wild bordermen—had been used as a place of refuge by runaway negroes; but was chiefly the rendezvous of the abominable race of White Indians, or renegades, who played so infamous a part in the war, and who, as outlaws and outcasts of society, were compelled, when they wished to meet for the purposes of conspiracy or amusement, to select some spot where they were safe from the honest white men: from the Indians they had nothing to fear. Here it was that the spies, too, of the British army were wont to quarter during the war; and here might often be seen Red-Bird the Shawnee, Simon Girty the ex-American, now the bitter enemy of his countrymen, whom he had betrayed; Captain Peter Drayer, a Canadian, once in

the service of England, now a wanderer; and here, during the war, the celebrated Captain Duquesne had often organized his expeditions.

A small and beautiful glen, with pine and larch and elms bursting from its fertile sides, conducted the waters of a pleasant stream into a little pool or lake, which, after barring up the entrance of the valley, again fell away to the west, and by a winding course gained the Scioto, and then the Ohio. A path round this pool led, by a number of steps in the rock, to a rustic lodge, opening on to a platform, upon which was built, leaning against the rock, a house of somewhat antique appearance for that part of the world. It was built partly of stone, and partly of wood.

It was a quaint old building, the inn of the Frog's Hole. For about five feet from the ground it was of stone, moss-covered, and fastened together by plaster. Then rose a wall of planks, supported on the inside and the out by beams of wood that reached to the first story, which was a kind of loft, made use of as bedrooms, and to be reached only from the outside by means of a ladder. The house was longer than it was deep or high, extending some distance along the rock, and showing such a goodly row of chimneys as to hold out a promise of plenty within. And plenty there was for those who had money to pay, as Ralph Regin was a man who respected his customers, and took care they should want for neither meat nor drink in his house. There were hams, and ribs of beef, and legs of mutton, and fowls, and turkeys, and corn-cakes and hominy; but whence they came was another thing—a question, however, which none of the visitors ever asked. And there were whisky and Hollands, and brandy in profusion; and whence these came all knew, for few who frequented the house but aided in bringing up a supply

of fiery liquid, which sometimes brought more wretched Indians about the place than was agreeable or pleasant.

The platform, when the bridge was crossed, circled round the house on the side of the pool, which it towered over by some thirty feet—a steep and rocky descent of great difficulty, and which never would have been attempted in the face of a resolute enemy. It was, however, here that water was drawn up by a bucket, which hung over the part where the pool was shallow, and showed the golden sand at the bottom bright and sparkling.

On the evening of the day before Amy Moss fell into the hands of the ruthless gang of Shawnees it is that we introduce this place to the notice of our readers. It was a pleasant evening, and the rich tide of sunset fell with deep glow on the mossy walls of the inn, and illumined the face of a girl who stood beside the bridge, looking down with thoughtful mien upon the plain below. She was about nineteen—a tall, handsome girl, of rather bold and decided mien, as if accustomed to rude life and the companionship of rough men, especially those who frequent inns and grow boisterous, maudlin, or ferocious over the demon drink, which, let a man's prejudices be what they may, is an awful master to get complete hold of a man.

She had bright, sparkling eyes and white teeth, which she was rather fond of displaying; and she wore a bodice like a Swiss girl, and short woollen petticoats, and red stockings; the whole neat and jaunty and fascinating—a little jewel, in fact, of a Dutch picture. Her character will better appear from our narrative than from any description.

"Father," said she, suddenly, in a cold voice, as of one who spoke that word from necessity rather than choice, "there is a traveler crossing the dyke."

"Who on airth is it?" replied a thick voice from within.

"Well, I don't know; I think it's Ezram Cook, the peddler-merchant."

"My!" said the other, coming out and shading his eyes with his hands, to catch the figure of the wayfarer.

His eye fell first on the deep foliage of the forest, which could be seen mellowing away into the far distance, golden and sparkling beneath the setting sun; then it came down to where the trunks and roots of the trees were left in deep shade; and then it settled upon the figure of a man moving along steadily on a horse with a small pack.

"Well, it is Ezram Cook, I do dectayre; he's been up selling and collecting in his money, I expect. Martha! thar's one with a mighty good craw coming to supper. So you're a-looking out for *him*, are you? He won't come here to-night."

This was said in a half-sneering, half-anxious tone, as if the speaker hardly knew how the listener might take it. He was short, thick-set, and powerful in make, but every thing in him was ungainly. He wore a dog-skin cap close over his low forehead, which formed a perfect pent-house over little round gray goggle eyes, that were forever moving restlessly about, as if afraid each instant of Indians, or constables, or something terrible—he could hardly, perhaps, say what. He wore a thick beard over chin, face and upper lip, so that little could be detected of expression, save where his thin lips, closed over his projecting teeth, gave a savage and brutal expression which never failed to strike all beholders. He wore a great loose blanket coat, corduroy trowsers, and huge, heavy boots made for contending with mud and swamp; and his name was Ralph Regin. He had once been hostler at Scowl Hall, years before, but, detected in a theft,

had left it, and never been seen again, until one memorable occasion, hereafter to be described, when the negroes said they saw him lurking about the premises.

A terrible murder had been perpetrated about the time of his disappearance. An inoffensive Dutch settler, with a very pretty wife and child, and possessing, it was well known, considerable wealth, had been murdered near his home down by Wheeling, and his log-house fired, and his wealth, family and furniture destroyed with it. The fire was so tremendous in its effect, that when there came neighbors from the nearest station, it was reduced to a pile of ashes, and was ever after left a memento of a terrible and mysterious tragedy.

"I know better than you," said the girl, after a pause, "that he will not come to-night. His beauty will not be here."

"I reckon not; it ain't likely; the boys ain't up yar yet, and I don't conclude one or *tu* will like to go down to Crow's Nest. Harrod ain't no chicken, I know. He'll fit."

"Of course he will, and I hope he'll kill the wretches. What does he want with this work? She is to be his wife—"

"Wake snakes and walk chalks, my pretty Kate," said the ugly innkeeper; "not so sure—"

"What mean you?" exclaimed the girl called Kate, clutching his arm.

"Well, don't be so raspish. It seems she don't convene to him just as much as she used; she's kicked once or twice; she don't like to break off, and jist right away, but she's riled him a few. Howsomdever, he knows she don't like him."

"Why, then, will he persecute her? Why will he not give her up? He must be meaner and baser than an Indian."

"You women is so mighty quick. She's rich, and my! ain't she *bootiful*—sich eyes, and sich a

skin; she's about the smartest gal in these parts."

"Ralph Regin," said the girl, advancing close to him, "what is the meaning of all this? Why am I tortured thus? Did you not say she never should be his, and that I should be his wife? Speak, I ask you?"

"Don't hollo! I ain't deaf; I wish I was. Lor! a catamount's nothin' to a 'ooman. Well, I did say so, and the mole-eyed varmint shall, *tu*. I've sot him a riddle. S'pose I say s'pose"—and the fellow laughed—"s'pose some few of Injins war to be afore them spekulators, eh?"

"What mean you? Give her up to the bloodthirsty red-skins?"

"You're mighty pertiklar, you are. But they ain't *toe* kill her—not by no means. She'll fetch ten thousand dollars, she will, and no mistake; and I go halves."

"But what is the use of all this? He'll be angry, and that will not serve me."

"Kate, now *du* tell, what on airth makes you like that varmint?" said the other, imploringly.

"Ralph Regin—for I can not and will not call you father—will you ask why the wind shakes yonder trees? Will you tell me why the panther will come to one particular place to clutch his prey, despite all danger? Will you tell me why the bird clings to its mate, and the chicken runs to seek shelter near its mother? I can not—I only know that I love him. He is a bad man—a bold, bad man—but I knew not this at fifteen; and then he said soft words to me, and his eyes looked love, and he smiled, and his voice was gentle, and—and—I loved him. What then that I know he loves another—that he would wed her, and not me? I can not alter it. I hate and love him both. Now love is uppermost; but hate may be one day, and then—"

"What then?" sneered Ralph Regin.

"Never mind; here comes the peddler."

"Hilio! Leave the old hoss in the stable, Mister Ezram; he'll never run up thyat ladder; thar's no horse-thieves up yar."

The peddler made no reply, but took his horse into a stable at the foot of the rocky stairs, and after a few minutes returned with his bags, pistols, and a somewhat heavy portmanteau, which Ralph assisted him to carry up the steps.

"Evenin', stranger," said Ralph, pretending not to know the peddler, who had never been up there before; "jist in time for supper; come doon country?"

"Well," replied the other, a down-east Yankee, "I *are*; I've been doin' a considerable slick trade; got in *the* browns mighty well. Sold yup considerable figure ~~at~~ watches and chains; glad to yar supper is ready, 'cause I'm famished and tired."

They had now reached the top of the steps. Kate was looking hard at Ralph Regin, in whose eyes, even in that twilight, she thought she detected a strange expression.

"Give me your bags and let me show you a room," said she, abruptly.

The stranger started as he gazed on one so fair and neat, and his countenance assumed an expression of satisfaction as he followed her. They passed through a room used as kitchen, dining-room and tap-room, went up seven steps to the door of a room which Kate threw open, and in this the traveler deposited his goods. When he had done so, the girl, who was bustling about in rather an angry way, as if this kind of work disgusted her, pulled the key out of the door and gave it to him.

"There are many travelers here sometimes, so keep the key of your room."

The peddler started, but the face of Kate was so calm and careless that he took the key, made no remark, and went down-stairs.

The room was large and airy. A large fireplace, which admitted of benches within its ample dimensions, was occupied by a huge iron pot and a turkey roasting. A woman of about forty, somewhat stout, handsome still but for a wild and savage expression, was preparing the evening meal. A dresser covered by abundance of crockery, a bar filled with colored bottles, a huge table, several chairs and stools, guns, hams, sides of bacon hanging round the walls, with two windows and many doors, completed the scene.

"I guess that smells fine," said the peddler, rubbing his hands.

"What kind o' livin' have you had lately, then?" asked Ralph.

"Nothin' solid or pleasant—birds and dry jerked beef."

"Poorish! Well, it's better farin' yar, so turn to; we're all at home."

All sat down—the woman, who had black hair and eyes, and tawdry finery, and a coral necklace, and a watch, and a dirty lace cap, at the head, Ralph Regin at the end of the table, Kate and the peddler opposite the fire. The supper was plentiful and well cooked. There was liquor in plenty, and the peddler, who was very weary, ate his meal in silence, swallowed a horn of corn-juice, lit his old pipe, and stretched himself on a bench by the fire. Kate helped to clear away, and then sat down also, and took up a book—a strange thing up there, and yet there were many in that house, for Mrs. Regin had been almost a lady once, and had, despite crime and guilt, educated her child up to a certain time. Kate now wanted no assistance, and one who wished to obtain her smile, often brought her such books as he thought would suit her taste.

Presently the peddler-merchant rose, yawned, said he must start "airly," and taking a light, wished all good-night, and went to bed. Kate, who had never turned over

a single leaf of her book, and who had been watching every motion and look of the man who called himself her father, also lit a candle and went to bed. Her room was beside that of the peddler, but on a level with the kitchen.

"Now, Martha," said Ralph Regin, in a low, hushed voice, hissed forth from between his teeth, "that peddler's box is full of dollars and watches. He must sleep in the pool."

"No more murter," replied the woman, sinking into a chair, and hiding him from her with her hands.

"Hush! the girl may be listening!"

And Ralph rose, crawled across the room, but stopped as he heard Kate singing merrily at her window.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDIAN VILLAGE.

WHEN Custaloga left his companion in that wild gully of the woods, he began his journey with all that caution and circumspection for which his race have so long been widely celebrated. His ear drank in every sound, he trod the woods with the lightness of a fawn, his feet scarcely stirred the leaves and twigs which covered the ground, and his arms were so held as to avoid all chance of contact with the trees.

There was something singularly solemn in the aspect of the forest through which the red-man glided noiselessly, stealthily, as a snake does through the tall prairie grass or the thick under-brush. For some time his path led through the thicket that skirted the side of the stream. This, however, he crossed at the first convenient opportunity, and plunged deep into the forest itself. It now became truly a matter of wonder how he guided himself, how he found his way. All was darkness, gloom, and night. There was not a sound

to tell that nature was not dead. Not an owl hooted, not a wild beast was heard to roar; and the gentle sighing of trees in the light air that prevailed, was all that told that nature still lived and ruled creation.

But Custaloga moved along with the unerring instinct of a woodman, one of the first features of whose woodcraft was to find his way where no man else could guide himself. When one has become in some degree accustomed to the forest and the prairie, it is singular with what ease he penetrates in a direct line through wilds where there seems no guide.

But the moss on the trees, the pebbles in the path, the color of the bark, the twinkling of a star, the point of a rock, are indications to the hunter as sure as sign-post or road. As, however, Custaloga proceeded, he slackened his pace, until at last he paused, looked round, and then seated himself at the foot of a tree. He was now on the summit of a gentle slope, very thickly wooded, but with scarcely any undergrowth of bushes.

Custaloga had rested himself for about five minutes, and had in that time gained breath and considered the course now to be adopted. He began by hiding his rifle behind a tree, whence he could easily snatch it, but where, from several trunks being together, no one could very easily see it in passing.

He then lay flat on his face, his ear to the ground. The change from the stillness of night in that gloomy thicket to what he now heard, was very singular and striking. He seemed quite surrounded by busy life, by some phantasmagorical life, through which he could hear murmuring, whispering, buzzing, but which he could not see. The gentle wind which prevailed came up the slope, and brought with it sounds of warriors gravely talking, of maidens laughing, of women scolding, of dogs growling over a bone—all the usual manifestations, in fact, of Indian life.

"Ugh," muttered Custaloga, whose Wyandot caution had served him well.

Generally speaking, it would have been quite safe for the Indian warrior to have approached the camp of the Shawnees at that advanced hour of the night without many precautions, the Indians not being in the habit of sitting up much after dark. But, on the present occasion, something out of the common doubtless made them more than usually excited, and Custaloga at once made up his mind that it was, as he had expected, to this village Amy had been brought, and that the warriors were telling the stories and narratives of their adventures while smoking their pipes over the camp-fires.

Having gone so far and learned so much, the Wyandot was not a man to retreat without making sure of the fact he was so deeply anxious to know, and by which he intended guiding his future proceedings. Instead, therefore, of retreating when he discovered that the Indians had not retired to the shelter of their wigwams, he merely determined to act with extreme caution and circumspection, clearly, however, showing, that he did not intend to retreat. He now kept nothing on him but the small breech-cloth of the Shawnee warrior on the war-path, fastened his hunting-knife in his belt, tightened the thongs of his moccasins, and began quietly descending the slope toward the village. It was a position and an hour which would have sorely tried the nerves of any, save a borderman or an Indian.

He had advanced a hundred yards before the voices, which had been so plain above when he lay on the ground, became again audible. He now seemed a vision of the night, so solemnly did he stalk on toward the edge of the clearing. In a few minutes he stood as near as was consistent with safety to the Indian village

of Wya-na-mah, a kind of outpost of Chillicothe.

A large, natural opening in the forest, where an arid soil or some accident had prevented the thick growth of trees, or which in days gone by had been cleared, had been selected by the Shawnees for their town. About thirty wigwams had been arranged in a semi-circle round an open grass-plot, much worn, however, and stubbly; and behind these a rude stockade was visible, which also extended round in front, leaving only two entrances to the village, which were guarded by hungry dogs.

There were two fires on the open plot in the center, round one of which about twenty warriors were collected, while as many women and girls were congregated near the other.

It was a wild and singular scene. Around, the dark and gloomy forest; above, the sky, now illumined by the rising moon; and there, the conical huts of the terrible red-skins lying still and yet marked in the moonlight; and their owners, those grim and ghastly warriors who during that day had wrought so much evil and done so much mischief—mischief never to be forgotten—sitting there like peaceful citizens in their pleasant homesteads, talking, laughing, chattering, thus at eventide, without any of that gravity and solemnity assumed at times for a purpose. It was truly a subject for the pencil of a Murillo or a Claude. And the merry group of girls, and the sedate and sad women, were, with the children, the dogs, and the other little addenda of the scene, singularly picturesque.

Custaloga stood in the deep shadow of the trees, about thirty yards from the fire around which the women were congregated. It was evident, from the stockade being, in some instances, built close up to the trees, which thus could easily have afforded dangerous cover to the lurking foe, that

the Indians considered themselves tolerably secure up in Wya-na-mah or that they trusted chiefly to their scouts outlying in the forest.

And Custaloga looked in vain, amid that group of tawny girls and bowed and chastened women, for the form of Amy. His quick and piercing eyes wandered everywhere around the camp, but not a sign of her existence could be seen in any direction, nor of any thing else which that day had been stolen from the Crow's Nest, the property of the Silent Hunter.

Still, from a few words he was able to distinguish, he was satisfied that Amy was concealed in one of the huts; but his determination was so great to be certain of this fact, that, utterly disregarding all ideas of danger, he determined to enter the camp itself before he departed, and satisfy himself upon this point. The manner of Custaloga was not at this instant that of an Indian warrior. He seemed rather one of the children of the pale-faces, so impatient did he appear.

But with a shake of the head he kept down the rising feeling of boyish impatience which had moved him, and stood close to the tree which afforded him shelter—so closely, indeed, that he seemed part and parcel of it. He appeared a statue, not a man; so motionless, so upright, and yet so graceful was his mien.

He listened to the talk of the girls, he heard the guttural tones of the warriors, the bark of the dogs over their bones, and then suddenly he started, despite his self-possession, as a howl resounded through the forest—a wail, a howl of woe, uttered by one long practiced in such screeching. A deathlike pause ensued, the warriors were all silent, the girls laughed no more, as all waited for the explanation of this noise.

A woman came staggering from out a wigwam, her hair disheveled, a tomahawk in her hand, and advanced, still howling and wailing,

toward the warriors, who rose to receive her with a marked politeness which would have done credit to the most civilized society. Having reached the group, she halted, and was immediately inclosed by the circle of women, who kept at a respectful distance, still near enough to hear distinctly. Custaloga himself felt inclined to advance; but he contented himself with gliding forward to another tree, and then stood still, leaning forward, listening with rapt attention.

"Cosama was a brave—no hunter," she began, "ever made his wigwam warmer, or kept it better supplied with meat—he was never the last on the war-path, his cry was always heard on the battle-field; his wife and little ones were happy, for they knew the husband and father was a brave. And where is Cosama now? Is his voice heard at the council-fire to-night? Will his cry ever wake the echoes in the forest again? No. He went forth, on the first day of the moon, to fight the sneaking pale-faces, and yesterday he fell into an ambush, and the great warrior, Cosama the brave, the Quivering Spear, died by the hand of a squaw. Wah! The wigwam of Rice-stalk is empty; no more shall the voice of Cosama bid his woman go fetch the game in the forest; no more shall his boy run to meet him on the edge of the wood, and learn to be a brave at the sound of his voice. Cosama was a brave, but he died by the hand of a squaw. A woman of the pale-faces is in yonder tent, a pappoose is by her side; they are alive, and Cosama is un-avenged."

Custaloga shuddered, clutched his knife, and drew back for a bound. His eyes glared, his form seemed to swell, and one would have said he was about to do reckless battle with the whole tribe.

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